

Maurice, Matthias

Social religion exemplified, in a account of the first settlement of
Christianity in the City of Caerludd

Holywell 1820

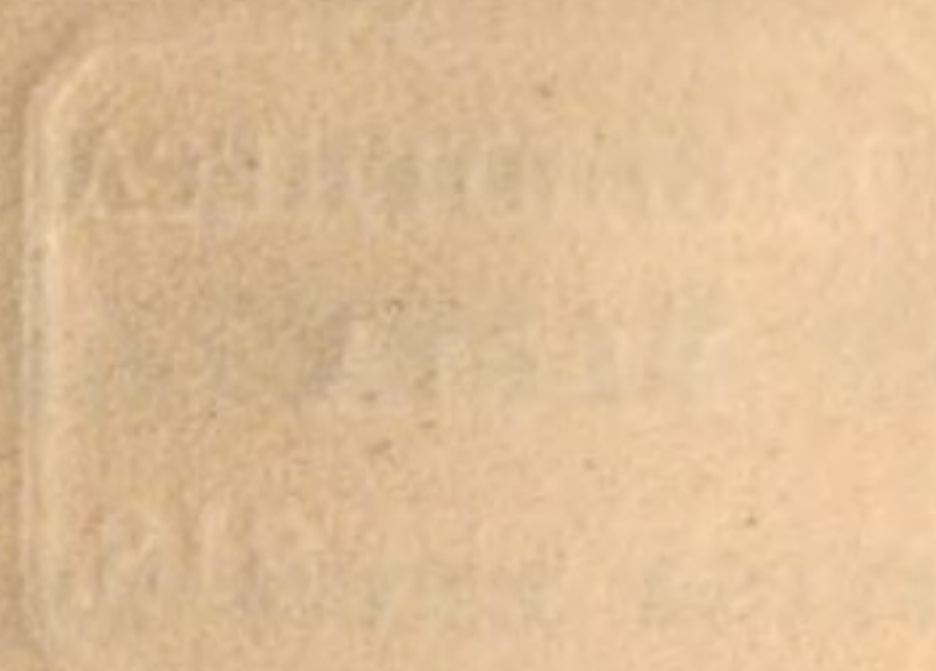
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SOCIAL RELIGION
EXEMPLIFIED,
IN
AN ACCOUNT
OF
THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
OF
CHRISTIANITY
IN THE
CITY OF CAERLUDD.
IN TEN DIALOGUES.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY BY THE
REV. MATTHIAS MORRICE.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

REVISED AND CORRECTED ; WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES,
BY THE
REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS, D. D.

For who hath despised the Day of small Things?

Zech. vi. 10.

HOLYWELL :
Printed and Published by E. Carnes ;
AND SOLD BY
EDWARDS AND KNIBB, 53, NEWGATE-STREET, LONDON.

1820.

SOCIAL RELIGION

EXAMINED

IN

AN ACCOUNT

OF

THE FIRST SETTLEMENT

OF

CHRISTIANITY

IN THE

CITY OF CAIRO

IN TEN DISCOURSES

BIBLIOTHECA

REGIA

MONACENSIS.

REVISED AND CORRECTED; WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES

BY THE

REV. EDWARD WILLIAMS, D.D.

For who hath opened the Day of Wrath

HOLY WRIT

Printed and Published by E. Currier

AND SOLD BY

EDWARDS AND KNIGHT, 5, NEWGATE STREET, LONDON.

1822

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DIALOGUE I.

The Introduction. The Druids noted. The Roman Invasion a means of the greatest Deliverance. The primitive Churches. The first Churches in Britain, what. Dewi and Yefan, two Gentlemen of Caerludd converted to Christianity at Hyfrydle. How they were entertained by a godly Landlord at Supper. Their Conference with the Bishop Ffyddlon. His Presents and Advice to them. They depart for Caerludd.

IT is not a thing very difficult to a religious mind to form ideas of a certain village, much to be desired and delighted in, called therefore Potheina, where the eternal God, as the God of universal nature, has ordered every thing to the best advantage, to a contemplative mind, and social communications and improvements. For the former, the circumambient air, serene, refreshing, and wholesome; enclosures and meadows, green and delightful; adorned and enriched with every thing useful and pleasant: chrystal springs, purling streams, agreeable retired walks, not artificial; either in the open space, or in the shades among trees, low and fruitful, or lofty and majestic. The houses not contiguous, but disposing at a becoming distance, surrounded with their gardens, orchards, and every useful plant, hiding, and yet in part discovering it themselves, among the trees that cheerfully stand for ornament, defence, and refreshment; and the houses, thus disposed, surround-

ing a most delightful green, not vastly large, yet common to them all: and therefore also most convenient for neighbourly conversation, and useful society, when retired from their flocks, and their hands withdrawn from the labours of the field: and where also the eternal God, as the God of all grace, has reached the souls of the inhabitants, by his eternal spirit; and has converted them to himself, making them truly holy and humble, and leading them to look unto the risen Redeemer, as exceeding precious; from whom they receive all grace, and also gifts and endowments, suitable to promote the good of society in prayer, and evangelical conference. Such the place, far from the noise of the world, the pomp and grandeur of time; and such the inhabitants, strangers to the pride, luxury, ambition, and tyranny of the degenerate crowd, but not to Christ and themselves.

The custom of the inhabitants of Potheina was thus: On every Lord's-day they went, old and young, as many as possibly could go, or be carried, to the public worship of God, in a christian congregation, at some distance from them, they belonged unto; at evening they met among themselves to pray, to repeat what they had heard that day, and declare what their souls had experienced; then sing a psalm, or a part of a psalm, and conclude in prayer. One week-day evening they fixedly kept also in prayer, and conference upon some divine text; and for the greater advantage of the neighbourhood, they kept it from house to house; and every family was glad when their turn came to enjoy it. And besides this, there was another evening in the week, which the principal inhabitants of Potheina generally kept for common and civil conversation, but always seasoned with a religious spirit and design, and often wholly took up on a religious subject: and, to add to the pleasure of this meeting, they often had it, (indeed always at proper seasons and weather,) under an ancient well-spread oak, which stood at one end of the green, under which, benches

for the purpose were fixed, from whence they had a prospect of their several habitations, and where, upon any business, any of their families could readily find them.

Here their conversation was sometimes upon what did directly concern them as husbandmen; sometimes upon history, what they knew, sacred or civil, with moral and religious remarks; sometimes upon the works of creation, and the wonders of the divine power and design in what fell under their notice; sometimes upon Providence, the wisdom and mysteries thereof; sometimes the person, office, and work of Christ; the divine perfections, the controversies of the day, and the wisdom of Christ in suffering them: indeed, whatever might be truly pleasant and profitable, was took up by them as occasion offered. But the particular conversation of theirs, I have before me to give some account of, concerns the matter, form, order, and discipline of a church according to Christ's institution. *The occasion of which conference take as follows:*

Some of the neighbours being come, on a certain time, to the spot, had no sooner seated themselves and began to look about them, but another very useful neighbour, named THEOPHILUS, takes his seat among them, and, with a pleasant smiling countenance, says, My friends and neighbours, I am heartily glad to see you here, and so well.

PHILALETHES, (one of the company,) answered, And we are doubtless very glad to see you here, and so cheerful as your countenance discovers: but though you are always pleasant, yet at this time there seems to be something more than common that touches your agreeable fancy: I know I may assume my wonted friendly freedom, and ask you what it is?

THEOPHILUS. I think it becomes us who are saved by grace, to be always cheerful; though much laughter is often what a fool is known by, and we may say of it, It's madness! and of mirth, What doeth it? yet,

son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee, is an ancient instruction our Lord gave his people: but, to tell you the whole truth, I could not at present help smiling, to think how much like the Druids * among the Old Britains we appear.

PHILAL, I have heard and read something of them, and how they were in great respect among the ancient Britons; but, if I remember well, they were instructors of youth, judges among the people, from all impositions and servitude exempt, a kind of barbarous bards and superstitious priests: pray wherein can we be like them?

THEOPH. Really you almost spoiled my fancy; for I had none of all this in view, but the vast affection they had to groves and oak trees, under which they loved to philosophize; and doubtless from thence were called Druids, because *derw* is the British word for an oak; and the very fancy of our sitting and conversing near, if not in, a pleasant grove, and under a spreading oak, with its delightful misleto,† rare and uncommon, made me entertain the merry conceit that we

* The learned are not agreed about the etymology of the term; some deriving it from the *Hebrew*, DERESSIM, Contemplators; others from the *Greek*, *δρυς*, an Oak; but it is hard to imagine how the *Druids* should come to speak Greek: Others from the *British* DERW, whence they take *δρυς* to be derived, which is Mr. Morrice's supposition, and the most probable. See *Chamber's Cyclopædia*, article DRUIDS. Of all the ancient writers *Julius Cæsar* has given the fullest and clearest account of them. He supposes *Britain* to be the seat of their origin, and observes among other things, that some of them remained twenty years in a state of pupilage, because they are said to have gotten by heart a great number of verses; and one reason assigned was, lest the culture of the memory should be neglected.—*Cæsar de Bello Gallico*, lib. vi.

In their common course of learning they are said to have taught their scholars twenty four thousand verses.

† Ad viscum Druidæ, Druidæ cantare solebant. OVID.

Pliny relates, that the *Druids* held nothing so sacred as the *Misleto* of the Oak; that they sought groves of Oak for their residence, and made use of the leaves of that tree in all their sacred rites. One of the Priests cloathed in white, in the beginning of the year, gathered the *Misleto* with a golden scythe. *Plin. Hist. Nat.* lib. xvi.

were Druids. But, moreover, there were some things wherein they were really commendable: they believed and taught the immortality of the soul, and that there was but one God; observed, to the best of their knowledge, strict rules of justice; were, to the last degree, fervent in their devotions, and performed in earnest, without dissimulation, from the heart; the sight of which fervour and earnestness struck the Roman soldiers, who were never used to see any thing like it, with such terror, that, as Tacitus says, they could neither fight nor flee:* and, for their zeal, they were scoffed and derided by Lucan:† and I could turn you to the place where they were called fanatics too, by such as wrote on the Roman side; but sincerity of soul, and zeal in their way, did belong to the ancient Britons.

PHILAL. A very pleasant fancy, and capable of very good improvement; especially if one can, in a true light, but see himself such a Druid as our father Abraham was, who among the oaks of Mamre, pitched his tent, made an alter, and worshipped;‡ and some have thought the Druids, under ignorance, did derive their superstition from thence.

CHRISTOPHILUS, (another of the company,) said, Then miserable followers of Abraham they! but no wonder, when even those who came out of Abraham's loins sacrificed unto idols upon the tops of the mountains, and burnt incense upon the hills, under oaks, and poplar, and elm, because the shadow thereof was good.¶ But seeing cruel superstition reigned over the ancient Britons, notwithstanding their zeal and sincerity, it becomes us to admire grace, that ever the

* Druidæque circum preces diras sublatis ad cœlum manibus fundentes, novitate aspectûs perculere milites, ut quasi hærentibus mêmbris. immobile corpus vulneribus præberent. Lib. 14.

† Druidæ——solis nosse Deos, et cœli sydera vobis, aut solis nescire datum.

‡ Sept. Gen, xiii. 18. ¶ Hosea iv. 13.

gospel was sent into this island; and that under this oak, we can, in some measure of faith, bless God, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

PHILAL. That's well observed; and, my dear neighbour THEOPHILUS, I hope it might be attended with some usefulness in this small company, if you please to give some account of the early and amazing methods God did in providence take to convey his gospel into Britain, convert sinners to himself, and gather churches for his service and praise within this land.

CHRISTOPH. Indeed we read of an angel that sat under an oak at Ophrah, and brought good tidings to poor Israel in distress: I like your motion so well, that upon a due pursuit and improvement of it, I shall be ready to look upon you to be in a sense an angel under this oak, a special messenger sent to promote God's instruction and establishment; and therefore I humbly desire the request may be granted.

THEOPH. It is most certain that the Roman invasion was nothing but rank ambition, injustice and cruelty: the very history of it at this distance raises in every true Briton the most just indignation; but, upon a second thought, when a christian considers that by this means God was pleased to convey his gospel to the people who sat in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death, his heart is melted down to thankfulness to the Lord for the Roman conquest: *out of the eater comes forth meat, and sweetness out of the strong.* Not only much of the British wealth was transported to Rome, but great numbers of inhabitants, and many of them noble, were removed thither. They did not know for what end, but the eternal God, whose thoughts are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth, knew: there, in his own time, God met with many of them by his grace, and they found him, whom they had not sought. There was in Rome in those days, a church of Christ, famous in

faith; it was spoken of through the world,* and Britain heard the sound. Paul was there, and with him doubtless many of the Britons conversed. He mentions one British lady, who was well known to the churches, whose name was Claudia, and tells Timothy that she did salute him.† A christian she was of very great eminency, as may be fairly gathered from the apostle Paul's naming her upon such an occasion; and as for her other endowments and accomplishments, Martial has made her immortal.‡ We have reason to think there were many more of her nation reached by grace at Rome; who doubtless, filled with zeal for the interest of their Redeemer, and with love and pity to their poor native country, would urge the apostle Paul, and others, to come over and help. Who came first with the gospel to Britain, is not certainly known: some say Joseph of Arimathea, sent by the evangelist Philip from Gaul; others say Simon Zelotes; and some say the apostle Paul himself;|| indeed, all of them might, as some others think, and some eminent converted Britons along with them. But by what means soever, hither, through grace, hither the gospel in those early days was brought, and christianity was in Britain, about the middle of the first century. Indeed, the first christian king in Britain, and the world, was Lucius, *anno* 190, who sent Elvan and Medwan to Elutherius to Rome for instructions and rules of government; who sent him word again, "That they had, by God's mercy, in Britain, both the New and Old Testament; let the king, by the advice of his realm, take thence a law, and rule

* Rom. i. 8.

† 2 Tim. iv. 21.

‡ Claudia Cæruleis cum sit Ruffina* Britannis
Edita, cur Latiae pectora plebis habet!
Quale decus formæ? Romanam credere matres
Italides possunt, Atthides esse suam.

* Gruffydd.

|| Vide *Usseri Britan. Eccles. Antiquit.* cap. 1,

as God's vicar.* But christianity was in the land above an hundred years before him, the gospel in purity preached, many souls converted, and doubtless many churches gathered according to Christ's pure institution.

CHRISTOPH. Oh! my heart is warmed! my soul is filled with holy astonishment and thankfulness! that Christ should visit this land; that Great Britain among the isles, should wait for his law! that he should be exalted here! and that he should make the Roman cloud a chariot to bear him; the Roman cruelty the path of his mercy! that he should upon that conquest go forth conquering and to conquer! that true churches should be planted in the land so early! let us exalt his name together!

But one NEOPHITUS, (a young christian in the company,) said, That he had lately read the history of the Puritans, and that the author thereof says, That the first presbyterian church in England, was at Wands-worth, in queen Elizabeth's time, 1572, and that the first independent, or congregational church in England, was gathered at London, in king James's time, 1616, I fancy he does not think the first churches in Britain were such as you imagine them to have been; for according to him, though he himself is not of the established communion, yet he must judge the first churches to be of the same order with what is now called episcopal, and consequently must judge diocesan episcopacy, being first founded by apostles or apostolic men, to be of divine institution; or else churches of primitive institution must be different from all these.

* Usher places *Lucius's* conversion, and his *first* application to *Eleutherius*, by *Elvan* and *Medwan* in 176; and a *second* for instruction to govern in 179: Archbishop *Parker* asserts, that the *Roman* edict for abolishing the *Druids* in *Britain*, was the means of turning his thoughts to the true religion; but the existence of such an edict is doubtful. *Lucius* was stiled by the *Britons*, *Lles Leuer Mawr*, i. e. *Great Light*, or *the Illustrious*; because in his time, and by his means, the glorious *Light* of the Gospel was more generally spread among them,

PHILAL. The gentleman is alive, and doubtless able to give an account, when he pleases, of his judgment upon churches and church government; in the mean time, notwithstanding some things, we have reason to be thankful to him, for the great pains he has took, and the valuable collection of history he has published; and I heartily wish all, who love the name of puritans, had the history in their families, which I think they may read with great profit and advantage, without believing that the gentlemen in the parliament army were enthusiasts, or that the army in Naseby field did fight inspired with enthusiastic zeal. But pray, THEOPHILUS, that our young friend, and each of us present, may receive further instruction, let us have the pleasure of hearing from your mouth some account of the first churches in Britain, if you can give us any.

THEOPH. If you can give us some account what churches they are we can find in the New Testament: and if our neighbour PHILOLOGUS (here present), of whose ability and readiness to assist, we have had some experience before now, will please to give us some account what churches may be met with in earliest antiquity; and if our kind and affable neighbour, SYLLOGISTICUS, will lead us a little into the reason of divine institutions; than I can modestly venture to promise to tell you, what sort of churches were those first gathered and settled in Great Britain.

PHILAL. With regard to the task you call me to, I cheerfully embrace it, and declare that our Lord's own account of a gospel church, in Matt. xviii. 15-20, fix and determine my judgment for ever; the corrupt endeavours of many to cloud and perplex the text, move me not; the words are very plain, and where ever there is a community that answers them, there is a church of Christ: *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy bro-*

ther; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Such a church is intended here, we see, as can and should meet together for divine worship; as comes to be a church by voluntary consent and agreement; as gives unto particular members a special relation unto itself, and unto each other; therefore it is not said, go tell a church, but tell *the* church; and if thy brother offend thee; yea, such a church is intended, to which a poor brother may have ready access; and which as a church is to reason, judge, and determine; and such a church is intended, whose determinations must be according to Christ's word, that he, as Lord of the kingdom of heaven, may set his seal to them.

Again, the churches we read of in scripture, had their ministering servants, who were not to lord it over them, but to serve them in the Lord; namely, bishops and deacons*, the first were overseers of the flock of Christ†, to feed with the pure word of truth, and minister appointed ordinances, and in other words were called pastors, teachers, and elders; the other according to their primitive institution, were to serve tables‡.

* Phil. i. 1.

† Acts xx. 17, 28.

‡ Acts vi, 2.

Then the scripture churches were made up of visible saints*, they were living stones†, sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God‡, were partakers of the Holy Spirit of Christ, as a spirit of faith and a spirit of prayer||.

Also, the churches mentioned in the New Testament, were several or many in one neighbourhood, so we read of the churches in Judea§, which was but a small tract of land, and the churches in Galilee**, yet smaller, and we read of the churches in Galatia††, and of the churches in Macedonia‡‡, as distinct from that of Philippi, which was a town in that country; the church at Corinth, and the church at Cenchrea, which was a little town very near Corinth.

I must add, that it is expressly said of the New Testament churches, that they had each of them their assemblies of the whole church, for the enjoyment of privileges, and the discharge of duties. So the church at Jerusalem|||, so the church at Antioch§§, called the multitude***. The whole church of Corinth did assemble together in one place, for the solemn worship of God, and the exercise of discipline†††. At present I shall add no more: PHILOLOGUS, by his countenance, appears ready for his part.

PHILOLOGUS. Not so ready, but I was very willing to attend to what you had further to say; but seeing you choose for the present to add no more, which puts me upon expectation to hear more from you at time convenient, I take liberty to observe, what others have often observed before me, that it is evident from the primitive writers themselves, for of others, who many years, yea many ages afterwards, pretend to tell us, what those primitive gentlemen meant, and what they

* Rom. 1. 7. † 1 Peter ii. 5. ‡ 1 Cor. vi. 11. || Rom. viii. 9.
 2 Cor. iv. 13. Rom. viii. 26. § Acts ix. 31. ** Acts ix. 31.
 †† Gal. i. 2. ‡‡ 2 Cor. viii. 1. ||| Act. v. 11.—vi. 1, 2.—xv. 12,
 22.—xxi. 22. §§ Acts xiv. 27. *** Acts xv. 30. ††† 1 Cor.
 xiv. 25, 26.—xi. 17, 20.—v. 4.

did, making them antichristian, as well as themselves: I shall take no notice, I say, from the earliest writers themselves it is very evident, that the members of those churches were godly persons, acquainted with the life and power of religion, and by a heavenly conversation discovering themselves to be temples of the Holy Ghost. So Clemens of Rome, about the 70th year of Christ, according to some, but according to Helvicus, Talents, and many others, about the 90th, however, very early, writes in the name of the church he was pastor of, to the Church of Corinth, and salutes them, The called and sanctified through the will of God by Jesus Christ our Lord: and, that we may further learn what sort of persons they were, he observes that there was a plentiful effusion of the holy spirit upon them all; and that they were engaged in earnest prayers, for all the brotherhood, night and day, They were not poor prayerless creatures, unconcerned about the glory of God, unconcerned about the good of their brethren, but with fervor and constancy sought the face of God. Such were the members of the primitive churches. And Origen*, about a hundred and fifty years after, then says, "We do all that lies in our power that our congregations be composed of good and wise men" Vain and ignorant men were not admitted; they must be made wise unto salvation at first, and when they offered themselves to communion, they were not rashly received, nor yet were they neglected, but visited by the servants of Christ, and instructed, as the same author informs us.

Tertullian†, about two hundred years after Christ, says, "We were not received church members, that we might cease from sin, but because we have already

* An illustrious *Greek* Father of the christian church, who flourished in the beginning of the third century. He was a sufferer in the persecution under *Decius*, and died at *Tyre* in the reign of *Gallus*.

† A celebrated *Latin* Father of the christian church, who flourished in the latter part of the second, and beginning of the third century.

ceased*." From thence that trite saying among them, holy things to holy persons.

Again, those primitive churches had their officers, as in the very days of the apostles, namely, bishops and deacons. Wherever the churches sojourned, (to use a primitive expression,) whether in towns or villages, there their bishops, their overseers, pastors, presbyters, or elders, for all those words in the primitive language intend but one and the same; and there their deacons were, for their service. So the above-named Clemens, speaking of the apostles, says, "That they preached the word through regions and cities, and appointed the first fruits, or the first converts, after a spiritual trial of them, to be bishops and deacons." Their bishops or overseers in the Lord, and their deacons, were not poor boys, void of experience of the Spirit's work, upon and in their souls, but were the *first fruits*, addicting themselves therefore to minister to the other saints, for their edification, in faith, holiness, and comfort; also they were *their* first fruits, that is, from among themselves.

In the next place, those primitive churches had the power of choosing their own pastors: those who were to serve Christ in that capacity, were to be set a-part thereunto by the whole church, or congregation. Clemens tells us, that thus the first officers in the church were constituted, by the apostle's direction; and thus it was to be afterwards, they are his express words, "with the consent of the whole church." They might ask the advice and assistance of the neighbouring churches and ministers; but the work, in those early days of christianity, was chiefly their own: and so it continued unto the days of Cyprian†, A. D. 258, who expressly, as the president of a synod, praises two churches, who had disposed their respective bishops,

* TERTULLIAN *de Penitentia*.

† Another eminent *Latin* Father who suffered martyrdom at *Carthage* in 258.

Martinalis and Basilides, and had chose Felix and Sabinus bishops in their room, telling them, they had not acted irregularly in what they had done, since as the people had the chief power of choosing worthy bishops, so also, of refusing those that were unworthy*. And Cyprian acknowledges, that he was ordained *populi universi suffragio*. Epist. 55.

Moreover, all things in those primitive churches were done by common consent, all the people had a voice in whatever was done by the church as a church; nor were they esteemed church acts without this. Clemens therefore gives his advice unto the ringleaders of the disturbance at Corinth, that every one would subject himself unto the restored elder, and say, I will do the things appointed by the multitude. This method continued in the churches for some time, for Cyprian, about a hundred and fifty years after, then, says, that from the very first he was resolved he would do nothing without the knowledge and consent of his people†. And so we find that when persons in the church he belonged to, had been guilty of a sinful conduct, he would not himself alone be judge of their crimes; but professes they ought to be tried by all the people‡. and says, that the persons who had offended should come and plead their cause before the elders, and before all the people||. When some had returned from sinful ways wherein they had walked, and Cyprian was willing to receive them into fellowship; he complains, in his letter to Cornelius of Rome, of the

* Propter quod plebs obsequens præceptis Dominicis, et Deum metuens, a peccatore preposito seperare se debet: quando ipsa maxime habeat potestatem vel eligendi dignos sacerdotes, vel indignos recusandi. Cypr. Epist. 68.

† A primordiis episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine consensu plebis meæ privata sententia gerere. Cypr. Epist. 6. S. 5.

‡ Hæc singulorum tractanda sit et limanda plenius ratio cum plebe ipsa universa: Epist. 28.

|| Acturi apud nos et apud plebem universam causam suam. Epist. 10,

great unwillingness of his people to admit them: "O my dear brother, (says he) if you could be present with us when those perverse men return from their schism, you would see what pains I take to persuade our bretheren to be patient, and give their consent to the healing and receiving those poor sick persons; I can scarce persuade, yea I extort a grant from the people, that such be admitted*. So we see that when persons were received, the whole church admitted them; and when any persons were rejected, it was done by the divine suffrages of the people†. All things were debated in common amongst them‡. And for church worship and church acts, they always met in one place, which was frequently, therefore, called the church's house||.

It follows then, that those churches, where God in a special manner made his word successful, must be somewhat numerous. And for two hundred years after Christ, in what province soever churches were gathered, they were called the *churches* in such a place: so Irænaus§ of Lyons, about a hundred and eighty-four years after Christ, says, the churches in Germany, the churches in Spain, in France, Egypt, &c. which was the language, at least generally, of all others in his days, and earlier. The churches or congregations

* Videres quis mihi labor sit persuadere patientiam fratribus nostris, ut animi dolore sopito recipiendis malis curandisq; consentiant; vix plebi persuadeo, imo extorqueo ut tales patiantur admitti; Cypr. Epist. 55. S. 17.

† Secundum vestra divina suffragia conjurati. Epist. 40.

‡ De iss quæ vel gesta sunt, vel gerenda sunt honor mutuus poscit in commune tractabimus. Epist. 6.

|| Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. cap. 30. lib. ix. cap. 9. De Vit. Con. lib. iii. cap. 36. The English word *Church*, as the Scotch *Kirk*, is probably derived from Κυρια οίκος, i. e. the Lord's House, and formed by contraction.

§ A Greek Father who flourished about the year 184, and was put to death in the persecution under Severus, at Lyons in France.

were many, and the bishops were as many; for every particular church had its bishop or pastor. Many of them might be small, and their outward appearance mean, but their real glory did lie in this, that God in Christ was the glory in the midst of them. From their meanness indeed, the merry Mr. Fuller, a friend of modern episcopacy, takes occasion to spend a banter upon them. "At this time, (says he,) bishops were set too thick for all to grow; and the Palestine fed too many cathedral churches to have them generally fat: Lydda, Jamnia, and Joppa, three episcopal towns, were within four miles of one another; their bishops had high racks, but poor mangers." In that age, bishops had their sees in poor and contemptible villages*. We read in Usher's Religion of the Irish, that even above five hundred years after Christ, there were in Ireland three hundred and sixty-five churches, and as many bishops; but there revenue so small, that some of those bishops, as Dr. Heylin tells us†, had no more than the pasture of two milch beasts.

To what has been mentioned we may add, that those primitive churches were co-ordinate, and not dependent, some upon others, as to ecclesiastical power; and had mutual communion by letters, by messengers, or otherwise, for each other's edification in love; each church, with its officers, acted as they thought most expedient, as those who were to give account only to the Lord‡. The earliest piece of antiquity we have, is that excellent letter sent from the church sojourning at Rome, unto the church sojourning at Corinth, wherewith messengers were also sent; Claudius, Ephesus, Valerius, Bibo, and Fortunatus, from the church||.

* Hist. Holy War. B. 2. C. 2. P. 45.

† Cosmog. p. 342.

‡ Singulis pastoribus portio gregis sit adscripta quam regat unusquisque et gubernat rationem sui actus Domino redditurus. Cypr. 72.

|| Clem. Epist. p. 73.

As their letters were sent by the universal consent of one church, so they were read to all the brethren of the other*; and they had either their stated meetings, or occasional synods, as they thought good, for each others assistance in difficult cases. But I have taken up too much of your time†.

SYLLOGISTICUS. I am certain none of us think so, the little time you took, you filled to good purpose; for you have left me nothing to do, but to observe that the first churches, according to the account you both gave of them, are every way accommodated to answer the ends of a divine institution; that Christ alone, as Judge, Lawgiver, and King of his church may be exalted, his love, care, tenderness, and pity, represented; his authority maintained; our obedience manifested; and our mutual edification promoted. Here's no fuel for the pride and ambition of the human minds, no foundation laid for worldly grandeur, nor any encouragement given to the cunning and crafty to form devices to ride over the rest of mankind; no door opened unto any vice; but holiness, humility, brotherly love, innocency, and all usefulness, established, and therefore highly reasonable: all this, and more, I shall be ready, I hope, to make good whenever called. Now pray, **THEOPHILUS**, what sort of churches were first gathered and planted in this land?

THEOPH. Upon all this I dare venture, without the least hesitation, to affirm, that the first churches in Britain were strictly congregational; for the account our kind brethren and neighbours gave of the apostolic

* Vicarias vero pro nobis ego et collegæ et fraternitas omnis has ad vos literas mittimus. Cyp. Ep. 58. Sanctissimæ atq; amplissimæ plebi legere te semper literas nostras. Epist. 55.

† Whoever would wish to see the above particulars treated more at large, may consult Lord *King's Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, &c. of the Primitive Church*. An author not less remarkable for his impartiality and candour, than his ecclesiastical learning.

and primitive churches, can agree with nothing else; and their institution is so agreeable to all spiritual reason, that the divine stamp plainly appears thereon. All levelled against the pride and corruption of man; all directed to the glory of Christ; all accommodated to the good of souls: What churches did the apostles and evangelists plant and water in Judea and Greece? Churches of the same order, most certainly, they planted and watered in Britain. Congregational they were there; it must follow congregational they were here. About the middle of the first century, when the Roman yoke was heavy upon the Britons, many of them, by the grace of God, took the yoke of Christ upon them, and found it easy.

CHRISTOPH. Through grace we must say, his yoke is easy; he is precious to us, his yoke is so; we love our Master and his service, and I am glad to hear you, most excellent THEOPHILUS, observe, that Christ's yoke was easy to the Britons, when the Roman yoke was heavy upon the land; and here I think we may admire the tender compassions of our dear Redeemer towards his infant churches in Britain, the amazing methods he took to screen and protect them; for though the nation in general was Pagan, and the rulers were so, and their enmity unto christianity we know must be great, yet, the repeated invasions of the Romans, the constant noise and din of war, battles, and bloodshed, kept them so employed, that there was little or no time to persecute and torment the christians*; though it is said Simon Zelotes was crucified here. Had Providence thought fit to provide for us, and preserve to us, a plain short history of those first congregational churches in Britain, or of any one of them, I should set a vast value upon it.

* DOROTHEUS relates that *Simon Zelotes* was crucified and buried in Britain, Vide *Usser. Brit. Eccles. Antiq. cap. 1.*

PHILAL. God knows best what is best for us; may we be helped to make the best improvement of what we have: but seeing we know those churches were congregational, may we not take an innocent liberty to form an historic idea of one of them, in a dialogistic method, and observe how it must be gathered, formed, fed, and governed, and very consistent with truth, seeing no person is imposed upon to receive it as fact, but as a delineation of what might or should have been; and, for the main, *must* have been, seeing those churches must be congregational? I hope I am a sincere lover of truth, and shall receive it in whatever dress or form it comes, and for some reasons, especially that of its aptness to instruct the meanest capacity, I choose the proposed form; and I am very certain that truth itself, who gave us the account of the prodigal son, his turns of life, his father, his brother, and the feast; and who gave us the account of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man's requests, and Abraham's replies; will never condemn our design: and therefore, in the name of the company, the neighbourhood and myself, I earnestly desire you, our beloved Epenetus, our senior, and the first fruits of Potheina, to undertake this task.

Epenetus. You commit the work unto a person of a very mean fancy and invention: but seeing it is among my neighbours and friends, who are persons of capacity and candour, from whom I may expect kind assistance, wherever it may be thought needful, I shall not altogether decline what you are pleased to call me to. But I shall not here consider what may be said of *Ynys-afalon*, afterwards called *Ynys Wydr**, where they say the Gospel was first preached in this land, and therefore called, The first land of God; nor whether, though Joseph might build a cell there, he really

* Glassenbury.

gathered a church there, nor how many churches he and others the servants of God, sent into this land, might see gathered, before they themselves were gathered home. My principal acquaintance being with a city called in that day *Caerludd**, I take leave thus to suppose it†:

That two trading well educated gentlemen, of that city, in their travels, providentially heard the gospel preached by one *Ffyddlon*, a faithful servant of the Lord: and though curiosity led them, yet now something beyond expectation touched them. They went into the assembly smiling, and despising the thing in their hearts, but came out with tears in their eyes, but perfectly afraid of one another, and endeavoured by many ways to hide their concern; for neither of them knew how it was with the other. They durst not speak a word about what they had heard, nor where they had been; but, after unusual silence, one of them thought he must speak something, and offered to say somewhat upon the design of their journey, but his words almost stifled him, spoke a few words brokenly, and hung down his head. The other answered him not; but after some time, and with an inarticulate voice, and with much ado, asked the former, Whether he was well? he just answered, See that we are alone, and the doors safe.

CHRISTOPH. O my dear EPHENETUS, you have so touched me, that I can hardly stand under the weight of affection; you put me in mind of the first visits of God upon my spirit: I was a poor wretch, neither expecting nor desiring any acquaintance with grace nor glory; I went without thought, nay worse, with madness in my heart against him, who is now, I hope, precious to me: and I was surprised, in such a man-

* London.

† Now the Narrative begins, and when read in families, &c. this Dialogue may be commodiously divided here.

ner as you have said. I have interrupted you, but excuse me, such passions as I now feel, attend to no order.

EPENETUS. Upon this, one of them, whose name was *Yefan*, said, Oh! my friend and fellow-traveller, how it is with you I cannot tell, and how it is with myself I cannot express; only I am under such a concern of mind, as I never felt, nor do I know whether any body else did ever feel such astonishing horror of mind. I did hear of this sect. and despised them, as ignorant vain babblers; I did hear of Jesus Christ, whom they preach, and in whom it is said they believe, and trampled him under foot: I was resolved never to be shaken in mind; I was resolved never to admit of the least esteem for such a Saviour. I went into the place armed with those resolutions; but do whatever I could, there was something entered my heart, when the preacher said, that all the world was become guilty before God, even they that had not the written law: and he did not only prove it by substantial arguments, but there was something like a court called in my own conscience; I was by some power, more than human, there indicted, proved guilty, and condemned; and there now in chains I lie. I am ruined, I am undone, my sins are gone over mine head, the burden I cannot bear, and I now see plainly there is no creature can help me.

The other, whose name was *Dewi*, with tears heard him, and after some time made answer. Oh! what a journey is this! what will be the end of it! I went along with you into the assembly to please my fancy, and I am sure under the same resolutions; bent, not so much as to consider any thing I should hear, unless I could catch at something to make sport of; but my sport is at an end for ever: I am slain, I am slain; many things delivered so fastened upon me, that all the powers of nature can never shake them off: the sinful actions of my life were laid in order before me, and

I could not help assenting to what I never heard before, that all those sinful actions did proceed from a corrupt fountain, a nature universally depraved and polluted: and when the preacher said, No man can redeem his brother, nor give unto God a ransom for him, it entered my soul; and under wounds which no human hand can heal, I lie. We have heard we must be judged, and we have heard the Judge is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity; that the law can admit of no abatement, and that sinners shall not stand in the judgment; well may we now bemoan ourselves.

All this while they sighed as if their loins would break, and their eyes were like fountains, and the more they looked at each other, the more they were affected each with his own wretched state; and with the deplorable condition of his friend. Of the business they came upon from home, and of their families at home, they now could take no thought. The weight upon them was wonderful, and bore all away before it.

THEOPH. Oh poor hearts! they wanted an interpreter one among a thousand, that might now try to speak a word in season to their burdened souls. But here they were alone, having nothing to point each other to, but their wounds and misery, shut up in a room; but alas! out of that they could depart when they pleased, but they were shut up, imprisoned, chained, and fettered in their own souls, and could not come forth. But our God, the object of our adoration and delight, being love itself, and full of compassion and pity, I hope did seasonably come, and command liberty to those captives, and the opening of the prison doors to those who were so bound, and give them beauty for ashes.

EPENETUS. You shall hear: all that night they had no rest nor sleep, but some slumbers attended with astonishing terror: death, judgment, and eternal destruction, was all they could see, and all they could

hear; and a terrible sound it was. It was a night indeed unto them; but as it is said in the word, *weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*; so in some measure it was with them, for about break of day

Dewi said, Do you not remember that the preacher said, that *God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved?*

Yefan. I believe I do; and another word, *There is salvation in no other*. Now, my poor *Dewi*, who knows what may be in such words? For my part, it is plain to me, we are ruined and undone. But these words speak of salvation: and though it is in no other but in him, whom we have so despised, yet it is in him, and who knows but he will save such wretches as you and I, seeing he saves sinners? And with that, they lifted up their voices and wept, and could speak no more for some time. Then said

Dewi. What must we do to be saved! I could freely die the most cruel death; or I could give the fruit of my body, for the sin of my soul; such sacrifices our Druids recommend; but, alas! I understand by what the preacher spoke yesterday, that the great God requireth no such sacrifices, accepteth them not, they were abominable to him, and the persons that offer them, do thereby make themselves still the greater sinners. For my part, I am at my wit's end, and don't know what to do!

Yefan, My friend, and brother in distress, there are two things come into my mind, as the properest steps, we can, I think, at the present take: seeing that God, before whom we tremble, is infinitely great, he must be infinitely good, let us try and pray to him; and then let us seek out that servant of his that preached, and tell him our case, and beg his advice.

Dewi. I like what you say, if we could come at it; but both the things are, unto me, seemingly impossi-

ble. I don't know, for my life, how to pray to God, whose terror makes me afraid, by reason of his greatness, I cannot endure: and then, as to the man, my heart sinks within me, at the very thoughts of seeing him, and speaking to him; and if he should speak roughly to us, I look upon myself as slain.

Yefan. But as I said before, though I am in my own judgment, as one already dead and damned, yet there are some things that encourage me; he that is infinitely great, I think, must be infinitely gracious, and I think we may very justly conclude so, when we bring the case home to ourselves: he might have destroyed us long ago, and he, being infinite, must be present here, and sees and hears us now, and yet does not strike us dead: I think there is grace in this. And then, as to the man, if he is the servant of the most high God, as I doubt not but he is, then he is merciful and compassionate; and besides, he said in his discourse, that every mouth was stopped, and all the world guilty before God; a word that touched you, and so it must touch himself, for he is one of the children of men, and must know what it is to be under guilt, and can therefore fellow-feel with us, and perhaps may tell us after what manner he was relieved.

Dewi. I still think that what you say is rational enough, but I wonder you can say it; sure I am in a worse condition by far than you apprehend: nevertheless, what you say is a little stay to me; but do in both as you think fit; and as you can; let me be but with you.

Upon this, they threw themselves prostrate on the ground, and it was a considerable time before a word could be said, but sighing, sobbing, with their mouth in the dust; at last, *Yefan* said, "O Lord God, the Maker of all things, and the Governor of the world, unto thee all power must belong, and therefore thou canst kill, and thou canst make alive. We are two poor heathen men, ruined and undone; we deserve eternal

death and destruction, and 'tis owing only to thy sparing hand, that we are alive. Thou canst in a moment crush us to death, and in just vengeance upon us, damn us for ever; but if thou pleasest, thou canst bring glory to thyself in the salvation of such wretches as we are. We understand that heathen men, as we are, have been turned to thee, and saved by thee: for the sake of all thy goodness, and all that whereby thou makest it known, turn us, and save us. Amen." And still on the ground they did lie, crying and bemoaning themselves; but after a while, got up, called for some water, drank a little, and washed, and went in search of the preacher.

PHILAL. We see persons in distress need not stay to have forms of prayer drawn up for them: their grief immediately turns into groans, and their pains teach them what petitions to put up. Their prayer makes me think of David's under some oppressing grief, *The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold of me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee deliver my soul.* Psalm cxvi. 3, 4.

CHRISTOPH. Oh, my dear PHILALETHES, what made you interrupt? I think every minute an hour, till I hear how they were received, whether they found any relief, and whether Christ was made precious to them? But, while I blame you for interrupting, I do but hinder the story myself.

EPENETUS. I told you, in search of the preacher they went, and upon enquiry, found out the house where he sojourned; but when they knocked at the door, they knocked like persons afraid to be heard; the person who opened the door, asked them what their business was? they asked him whether the preacher of christianity lived there, and whether he was at home? he answered, he was not at home; upon which they withdrew, and he shut the door. Their legs could hardly carry them, but into the mid-

dle of a broad space in the street they went, there stood looking at one another, trembling and astonished. At last, says

Dewi, What a disappointment is this! it makes the case look darker and darker to me. The great God knows our distress; and, as he knows all things, he knew we would go after this servant of his for some instruction and relief; and if it had been his pleasure, we should have relief to our distressed minds, he would have kept him in the way for that work. It looks to me as if we were to be shut up in darkness and distress for ever.

Yefan. My disappointment is great, and the greater because I entertained some sort of encouragement from a prospect of some conversation with him: it was on my heart with some expectation; and, to my great distress, I am baulked. But your conclusions are so dark and dismal, they are like death unto me; but still, who knows; let us go back again, and ask when he is expected to be at home, for that we forgot.

So they returned to the door, and again knocked; but the person observing them at earnest talk in the street, and knowing not what they said, was ready to think they were not upon a good design, and so was very backward to open the door. But says *Yefan*, Pray when will the gentleman be at home? says he, from within, Pray, gentlemen, what is your business with him? They replied, with a submissive voice, Pray be so kind as to open the door, and we will tell you. The door being opened, poor *Dewi*, with tears in his eyes, says to him, Pray, sir, will you give us leave to come within your threshold? Upon leave they entered. Says *Dewi*, with a countenance discovering the greatest concern, and tears upon his cheeks overtaking one another, Sir, are you a christian? He replied, Yes: and said, You make me take the freedom to ask you, what you are? Says *Dewi*, The Lord knows; and could say no more. Upon this

Yefan said, We were born at *Caerludd*, and bred and brought up there in the religion of our ancestors; and, as we see now, have hitherto lived in ignorance and infidelity; but hearing the preacher of christianity yesterday, have been under unspeakable trouble of mind ever since; and came hither to tell him how it is with us, as near as we can, and to attend to some instruction from him: but our disappointment adds greatly to our distress.

Says *Tosturiol*, for that was the man's name, I pity you both, and cannot at present put you in a better way, than to go and hear him preach to-day, at a neighbouring village; and though I have urgent business at home, yet apprehending this to be a service I owe to my dear Redeemer, and to my poor fellow sinners, I will go along with you, and hope we may be there time enough. Take a refreshing morsel of what is plain and wholesome, for if I mistake not, though you are gentlemen, you stand in need of it, having not been kind enough to yourself at your inn. They thanked him, accepted his kindness, and took a little, and presently set out.

As they went along, *Tosturiol* ever and anon would be a dropping something that concerned the kingdom of heaven, the misery of poor sinners by nature, the glory of Christ as a Saviour, the work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and the wonders of God's providence in sending the gospel to poor sinners, or bringing them to it, without their fore-thought, contrivance, or design; and took notice how all this would turn to the honour of infinite grace another day; and particularly observed how his staying at home, as he now saw, was not to attend on his urgent business, but to wait upon, and direct them to a worshipping assembly, where he hoped they were to receive some special benefit to their souls. Unto this, and much more to the same purpose, they gave such attention, as under their present circumstances they could; but said little

or nothing: nevertheless there was not one thing that fell out unto them or before them now, but what turned to their special advantage, so long as they lived; now were they a sitting up in God's school for the special service of his kingdom, as you may hear hereafter.

Before they came to the christian assembly, the worship was begun; and as they entered, the preacher, *Ffyddlon*, was reading his text; for sometimes, in those days, they read a text, and sometimes they did not; but, as I said, he read his text, which was that in Isaiah xi. 10. *To it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.* He knew nothing of them, nor their distress, nor their design, and that was a comfortable consideration to them afterwards: but he worked, and God worked.

He observed that the Gentiles were the poor heathens, and among others, the Britons; he observed their natural state was deplorable under the dominion of sin, like the troubled sea that could not rest, continually casting up mire and dirt; where, with special application he insisted on the wretchedness of man by nature: he observed that Jesus Christ was the blessed ensign set up for the people, proved it, and insisted much upon his suitableness to save, and the completeness of his salvation: he observed the efficacy of grace, in quickning and drawing the sinner, upon which the heathen should seek to him; and then observed how they should be graciously received, and should not miss of present rest in faith, faith that should infallibly reach to glory. He was a long while in his sermon; but had he continued his speech till midnight, they would not have been in the young man's case, who fell down from the third loft.

When tears and sobbing would give them leave, they had their eyes so fixed on him, as if their whole life was in every word he said; but at sometimes so overpowered with affection, that they hung their heads, cried, and wished they could have hid them-

selves within the hearing of him. Variety of passions discovered themselves in their countenances; sometimes the depth of grief, and sometimes, something like surprising joy. And as for honest *Tosturiol*, who brought them thither, he could not keep his eyes off of them; it was a feast to him, to think how the Spirit of God was working upon them; and blamed himself much that he should be so cruel to them, as to ask them with a sort of a frown, at home, what their business was with the preacher?

When worship was over, and the people dismissed, they went to the preacher and signified to him their deep unfeigned respects, and knowing him to be much spent in his work, only desired leave to wait upon him the next morning at his lodgings: he, in the most affectionate manner, told them, he should be very glad to see them. They got to their inn in good time, and bespoke a little supper, their poor natures, by this time, being very much spent, and not very capable of much conversation; and while supper was getting, drank one small cup a-piece of *meth-y-glyn*, and laid them down for some repose.

Being called to supper, and having taken their places the landlord, who at that time was to sup with them, with an uncovered head, and hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, implored the divine blessing upon the food Providence had prepared for them, and desired their table might never be a snare to their souls, but that they might be helped by the Lord to consider the hand that always opened to their relief, and make the best use and improvement of all refreshments, in the service and to the glory of God, through Jesus Christ. Upon this the strangers were desired to help themselves, which they accordingly did; and while they were refreshing themselves, said the landlord, whose name was *Buddiol*, a very useful man, How bountiful is our God! how amazing his providence! what a collection of mercies is here! together with health and

appetite to partake of them. Before these fowls were yet chickens, they were designed for our refreshment at this table; and every grain which in their thoughtless rambles they picked up, did grow for us; in what field we know not, and was found by them we know not where, for our sake. Here is bread, which without our care, grew first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, under the kind influences of heaven, ripened and reaped, gathered and ground, and by Providence, all the while designed for this company at this time. There is a cake indeed of my dear wife's making, but I heard her say, while she was making it, How many things has Providence here brought together, from I don't know where! what reason of thankfulness is here! What she said, I thought, refreshed my soul more than the best cake in Britain can refresh my Body. And to say no more, here is a cup of *meth-y-glyn*, which, God willing, we shall presently drink of, but who can tell, how many servants did our provident God employ, in order to bring this liquor to our table! how many bees! with what industry did they work! into what fields were their flights, where the mullifluous flowers grew for us! with what art was the honey gathered, brought home, and preserved! and all for us. Our God commands seas, rivers, and fields to serve us*. How does it become us to be thankful and holy, and see that we neither drink of this, nor of any other liquor to excess, but only so far as refreshment; that we may, with greater cheerfulness, honour our Redeemer. But, (continued he,) though all this is wonderful, what is it to redemption! whereby a poor sinner, who has ruined himself by his sins, is yet delivered from wrath to come, the law of God fulfilled for him by the Messiah, his sins fully, freely, and for ever pardoned, his soul converted

* His own words were; O fôr, ac o fynydd, ac o fîl o afonydd y denydd Duw dda i ddedwydd.

by grace, brought to believe on the son of God for righteousness and acceptance for ever; brought to see himself among the children, and blessed with the bread of life, the hidden manna, and the refreshment peculiar thereunto! enemies reconciled! strangers brought near! sinners saved! oh, amazing grace!

THEOPH. Oh, **EPENETUS**, I shall think of this supper, I hope, at every meal while I live; what a supper was this! which refreshes one at the distance of almost seventeen hundred years! and what a landlord was he! I wish we had, at least one such in every market town I go to: a God glorifying, Christ exalting, soul-instructing landlord; But who can tell how it will be when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas? But I want to know how it was with the two gentlemen.

EPENETUS. While he was discoursing of providence, their eyes were so fixed on him, that they could hardly regard their trenchers, only catch up a bit and look; but when he came to speak of redemption, and the salvation of sinners, through Christ, they could look up no more; oh they were melted, hung down their heads, and did all they could to refrain: which, when he observed, he thought it prudence for that time to desist, that the gentlemen might with the greater freedom refresh themselves. Supper being ended, he, in the fear of God, returned thanks, for the provision made, and the refreshment given, and desired the gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, so, that under his subduing, soul-sanctifying operations, they might serve the living God faithfully in the best use of all, through Jesus Christ.

After supper, he said unto them, Gentlemen, I am a christian, and look upon it as my glory; and esteem it no small honor conferred upon me, a poor sinner, that I love every duty belonging to the christian religion. I honor God as the God of the families of his people, and know that they should, as families, acknowledge and worship him daily. I worship God in

and with my family, I can command them; gentlemen strangers I never impose upon, and you are welcome either to join with us, or to withdraw to your room. They said, if he pleased, they chose to stay. The 31st chapter of the Prophecy of Jeremiah was read; the first chapter the two strangers ever heard read, and every part of it seemed to them to be filled with glory and power, more than human. The master of the family spoke something briefly to the contents of the chapter; then the whole family sung the 87th Psalm, and the master spent a considerable time in a judicious and affectionate prayer; and prayed very particularly for the strangers that were there providentially present, and desired God would make a precious discovery of the glory of his Son unto them, and bless them with strong faith in him, fervent prayer before him, and evangelical holiness to him, all their days.

But bed-time being come, and they now very willing to be by themselves, they very heartily thanked their landlord for his prayers for them, and wished him and the family a good night: and they were dismissed with the good wishes of the family; and the young man who read the chapter did light them to their room; who at parting with them said, Gentlemen, *mercy and truth be with you*, and so withdrew. But one of them said, Pray, young man, what do you mean by mercy and truth? he answered, The mercy to Abraham, and the truth to Jacob, which God sware unto our fathers from the days of old; or if you please; all the mercy of God in making, and his truth in fulfilling promises, Then we suppose, (said one of them,) if they were your fathers, that you are by birth and nation a Jew. He answered, No, gentlemen, my ancestors were Britons, and I was born one; but through grace, I am born again, and now believe in Jesus Christ, and therefore own myself to be Abraham's seed, and an heir according to the promise made to Abraham. Then said they, Young man, we wish you a good night.

CHRISTOPH. Well, sure, such a day, from first to

last, they never met with in their lives; what multiplied, repeated means of instruction, did our dear Redeemer find out for them? what treasures of grace belong to him! when I heard of their resolution to go and talk with the preacher, I never thought they were to meet with all this first: but our times are in our Lord's hands. Now I want to know how it was with them, when left by themselves.

EPENETUS. For a while they sat astonished under the weight of crowded and crowding thoughts, which unaccountably, in the greatest variety, worked in their breasts. At last says

Yefan. What an amazing day has this been! I have met with nothing but disappointments all the day! when I went expecting to speak with the preacher, I was disappointed; when I heard the rough reply of the man of the house, I expected nothing but unkindness, but I was disappointed; when I heard the preacher discourse of the sinfulness and misery of man by nature, I was laid open indeed, and my wounds were searched, I groaned under my misery, and expected no comfort, but I was disappointed in a very merciful manner; in an inn I expected no religion, but you see how we are disappointed. I hope your soul, my dear *Dewi*, has received this day, some encouraging instruction and comfort, and in this, I trust I shall not be disappointed.

Dewi. I must own every thing wonderful that concerns this journey of ours. When we left *Caerludd**, we did not determine to go any further than *Caerbadon*†, for the benefit of the *Twym-ennaint*‡; but then, finding ourselves cheerful and well, curiosity led us as far as *Caeroder*||, and we fully determined from thence to visit *Pencaer*§, *Caer-Gwent***, and *Clawdd-hanton*††, and so return: but unto ourselves

* London.

† Bath.

‡ Bath-Waters.

|| Bristol.

§ Exeter.

** Winchester.

†† Southampton.

unaccountable, we insensibly lost that resolution, and bore another way towards *Caerlow**, and calling at this contemptible village, which from henceforth we will for ever call *Hyfrydle*, without any design to stay, but hearing of a meeting of christians, had the curiosity to go to it; and blessed be God, my dear *Yefan*, blessed be God that ever we did. As you said, so I must say, disappointments we have had, but all I hope to our greatest advantage. Our landlord told us of the wonders of Providence at supper; and we may indeed say, the wonders of Providence! When I heard the preacher this day preach, Christ a suitable Saviour to the worst of sinners; and said, that he came to seek and to save that which was lost; it went to my very heart! indeed, before, I cried and roared for anguish of soul, and terror of mind, but then I thought my heart would have sunk within me, under the weight of a comfortable hope, that he would save me: it melted me, it made me cry for joy, and made me willing to die, that I might go to him that loved poor sinners, and died for them.

Yefan. Oh, this is precious! for my part if I had spoke to the preacher before-hand, and told him my case, I should have thought that he spoke to me on purpose, for every thing was so levelled at me; but you know he had begun before we got there: and so I hope I look upon what he said, to be provided for us by the gracious Lord, who knew your wants and mine; and therefore guided his servant to those things which were exceeding suitable to us. Oh, that I had all his discourse in writing! but that's a thing impossible, seeing what he spoke, for read he did not, he cannot speak word for word again; nor can I remember; only in the main, it was all very useful: and particularly that which he said, that a poor sinner,

* Gloucester.

who is like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but is continually casting up mire and dirt, should, let him be never so unworthy, upon his believing in Jesus Christ, enter into rest. I knew I had been restless all my life-time, in a dirty sinful way, and being now struck with a terror for it, was mighty glad to hear the preacher say, it was the word of Christ himself, that the weary and heavy laden sinner, should under his yoke, find rest unto his soul. And now, my dear *Dewi*, do you pray to God, and we will go to bed.

Upon this they both fell down upon the ground, as in the morning, worshipped the most high God, desired him to forgive all their sins, give them faith in his Son, give them understanding, holiness, and eternal happiness; thanked him for the mercies of the day, and committed themselves unto him for the night; not forgetting now their poor families at home: and all with many tears.

Morning being come, they got up, they worshipped God, both of them prayed, committed themselves to the Lord, and begged that day might be a special blessing to them. Some spiritual discourse they had, about what they experienced the day before; and some instructing, encouraging touches upon their fancies in the slumbers of the night; but they hastened to visit *Ffyddlon* the preacher, and the landlord being at leisure, they asked him to go along with them, which he said he would readily do; only he desired to worship God in and with his family first, for, (said he,) we may be detained there unto time inconvenient.

The family was called, the 68th Psalm read, whereupon the master of the family observed in particular the ascension of Christ, and his receiving gifts for the rebellious, that God might dwell among them, together with some other glorious truths held forth there; and then in a solemn manner prayed, offered praise for the mercies of the night, committed to God

all the concerns of the day, the work of their hands, their thoughts, words, and walk, desired deliverance from all evil, and more acquaintance with, and conformity to all the will of God; and prayed that their visit to the servant of God, their bishop, as he called him, might be attended with a special blessing.

Worship being over, they went; they quickly came to *Tosturiol's* house, where *Ffyddlon* the bishop sojourned, and found him ready expecting them; and after civil salutations, and seating themselves, *Buddiol*, the landlord said to his bishop, for he was a member of the church he was pastor of, Sir, those gentlemen, now they have entered the house, seem by their countenances to be under the power of some discouraging, dejected thought, and they, as I perceive, being backward to speak, I take this freedom whether it becomes me or not: I hope they are lovers of christianity; they cordially joined with us in family worship, and though I have not had much conversation with them, yet I know they are come to converse with you upon the great and weighty concern of religion.

Ffyddlon. Gentlemen, you are heartily welcome: I look upon it the business of my life, to serve my Lord and Maker Christ, and to the utmost of my power, my poor fellow sinners. But that it may be a sanctified opportunity to us together, let us seek the face of God in prayer. Accordingly with them, and for them, he prayed, and desired the eternal Spirit, who leads into all truth, would graciously guide thoughts and words to his glory, and to the instruction and edification of all present; and particularly, that the strangers, Providence had brought there, might have all their wants supplied, and they made a blessing to, and in their last moments, and then received to glory. And when prayer was over, said, Now, gentlemen, speak on.

Yefan. Sir, being on our journey, we called at this village, and put up at a house, that we shall

never forget; and hearing of a meeting of christians, our curiosity led us to go to it: we heeded no man, nor had any thought of God, despised the worship, and derided the Messiah you preached; but notwithstanding all this, which I tremble to relate, a power, more than can be natural, seized upon us; our sins were set in order before us, we saw ourselves lost and undone; but heard of a Saviour for the worst of sinners.———And upon this, by reason of tears in abundance, could say no more. But *Dewi* took it up, and went through most part of the story I have related, with some omissions, and some additions of what they had experienced: and then broke off abruptly, with desiring his judgment upon their case, and the best advice he could give them.

Efyddlon. You have given me some account of the work of God upon your soul; observe me, I call it *the work of God*, and that you may compare spiritual things with spiritual, I will give you a short account of the work of God upon me. I was born of heathen ancestors, and bred a heathen; and as I grew up, given to most of the vices of the neighbourhood where I lived, which was at *Tref-anrhaith*. But as vice grew upon me, checks of conscience also grew upon me, which much marred my comfort. I endeavoured to stifle those dark apprehensions that spoiled my pleasure, and used all the arts I was master of to do this, but never could thoroughly effect it. I found, though I had not the written law, nor never heard of it, that I was in a sense, a law to myself; my conscience accusing or excusing. I took great delight in shooting, was glad to be esteemed a dexterous archer; and could draw a bow and take aim, as I thought with any man: and one time, pursuing my game, at *Coed-mawr*, I saw a knot of people by the woodside, as in a ring, and one man advanced a little higher than the rest, and seemed to me, to be speaking to the company. I drew near, and found I was not deceived, for speak-

ing he was, with great affection and earnestness, the people many of them in tears, and joy sat upon the countenances of others. I gave no attention to what was delivered, but wondered to see the people so took with it. Anon, says the preacher, *Joseph*, now among the blessed: That man, (pointing to me,) may think there is none armed here but himself; let him know that there is: the glorious Redeemer, whom I preach, is in the midst of us, and is armed both with Justice and mercy: and with that cried out with a loud voice, *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously upon the word of truth, meekness, and righteousness.*—*Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies.* Upon this he considered who the enemies were, and what was their case; I quickly found myself among them, and as a wretched, lost, undone creature, I felt the arrows in my heart indeed. Every word he spoke pointed me out to be the man that must for ever lie under the avenging strokes of justice, and the only man there: for, as I told you before, they all seemed by their countenances to be sincere lovers of this glorious Prince of whom he spoke. His words were like a two-edged sword in my heart; I trembled, I hung down my head, but go away I durst not; but being wounded in soul, and dispirited to the last degree, I dropped my bow and arrows to the ground, and never took them up.

After some time, he came to mercy, and insisted upon the word meekness, and the word truth. I saw indeed that what he spoke then, was exceeding suitable to a poor wretched sinner, such as I was; but all that I attained to at that time, was, a desire to receive such tidings of grace. The people I judged happy, and wished myself among them; but yet concluded myself miserable. The meeting being ended, several of the people accompanied the preacher, and conducted him some whither. There was but one of the com-

pany that I knew, whose name was *Cywir*, he came to me, and took some notice of me, and desired I would go with him for that night; or if I would not, he offered me his company, for my company he was resolved to have. I accepted of his invitation for some reasons, and went with him. There was in his neighbourhood, that evening, a private meeting of a few christians for prayer and conference; he being a christian, knew of it, and went, and made me go along with him. Here, after prayer, one of them asked me, whether I was a christian? and how it was with me in my soul? His words did half slay me; they entered my very heart; I trembled and said, I don't know what, nor nobody else could understand me. My poor acquaintance, *Cywir*, did pity me; and so they did all; but said no more to me, only spoke their experiences in my hearing, and prayed for me. But the fright upon my wounded heart, put me into such a condition, that I could hardly consider or hear what they said. But they carried it kindly to me, and at parting, one of them, with tears in his eyes, said, The Saviour of sinners have mercy on thee, and reveal himself to thee! But my load was great.

That night my friend, *Cywir*, took a great deal of pains with me, sometimes instructing me in the principles of christianity, sometimes reading some part of the book of God to me; sometimes telling me his own experience, and how he had been as I was; and sometimes praying with me. I always pointed him to my sins, my wounds and bruises, and he pointed me to the wounds of Christ, and the blood of the everlasting covenant. Next day *Joseph* preached in another place, and *Cywir* had me thither; and *Joseph* took that text, Isaiah xliii. 24, 25. *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.* He opened all my disease, preached the glorious Physician who heals for his own name sake: God helped me to venture all

upon him; he received me, and I received him through grace. Unto him, as a perishing sinner, I came; and as a perishing, and in myself lost and undone sinner, I come to him still; for Christ says it, *him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.*

Yefan. Sir, I am very thankful for this precious account you gave of the work of God upon your own soul; and I humbly think upon the compare there is something of the same kind in what I am under. But I think I am not to build all my hope, neither upon a resemblance there may be between work and work, though that is encouraging, but upon such words as you mentioned last; I mean him who spoke the words, *him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.*

Dewi. And I, sir, return you many thanks also, and wish I could be as full of encouragement as my friend *Yefan* is. But I think there is such a dissimilitude between your account and what I feel, that makes me very much dissatisfied with myself; for you was the very next day helped to receive Christ, and to know that he received you; but as for me, I am not yet satisfied, whether I have received him, nor whether he has received me.

Ffyddlon. You may remember what your friend said, that our hope is not to be built upon a resemblance between work and work; for if it was so, the work being attended with such variety of different circumstances in those who are yet real christians, there would be very little hope found any where. The truth of the work lies in a turn of heart from self to Christ. Whoever is brought to see himself lost and undone by sin, to see that his own righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and desires to be found in Christ, and his righteousness, is a converted man, a believer in the Lord, whether he be fully satisfied concerning his own faith or not; and then, in the darkest times I would not forget, nor would I have any other christian forget the mentioned words of our dear Saviour, *him that*

cometh I will in no wise cast out. Faith is the same for kind in all converted, but as to the means and manner of God's working faith, there is a great variety. Your landlord is now called away, but at a time convenient, pray him to relate his experience.

And to make short of this work, the good servant of Christ kept them with him all that day, instructed them in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and they being men of good natural parts, some degree of learning, and now men of grace, they quickly took in all the principal doctrines of christianity; and after prayers and tears with them, and for them, he asked them, before many witnesses, who hearing of that day's work, desired leave to be present, whether they did now believe the truth of the christian religion, and renounce whatever was inconsistent therewith? They answered they did. He asked them, did they venture their souls upon Christ for all salvation, yielding themselves, and all theirs up to him, taking his yoke upon them, and resolving in his strength to obey and serve him for ever? They answered they did. Upon which he said, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?* He ordered it, and they were baptized on the spot*; and with fervent prayers and praises committed to God, and the word of his grace.

Being returned to their inn, their landlord saluted them with a Gentlemen how do you do? They answered they hoped, well, and admired the wonders of Providence in bringing them thither, and the wonders of grace in working upon their souls! Oh, says he, gentlemen, God's ways are in the deep, but they are all mercy and truth. This last word brought the young man to their mind, who did light them to bed the night afore; and said they, Pray, sir, how is it

* Mr. Morrice considers Baptism as an ordinance appertaining to Christianity, but not strictly a *Church* ordinance; which he infers from the examples of the *Ennuch*, the *Jailor* and others.

with your chamberlain, he dropped a word last night, which, not many days ago, we should have took for a certain mark of distraction; only then we thought there were some mysteries belonging to the christian religion, which he understood, and we did not: he said, that through grace, he was born again: pray what did he mean by it?

Gentlemen, says the landlord, it is a mystery, but one, which, through grace, you also understand; though you are not acquainted with that term: and upon this he calls *Alfred*, (for that was his name,) and says to him, pray tell these gentlemen what you meant by being born again through grace.

Alfred. Gentlemen, says he, and bowed himself toward the earth, I was born a heathen, and cannot say that I was brought up in any thing, but left to myself, and proved a poor idle strolling boy; and as for my notions of this world, or the next, I took them all, as my companions in vanity and wretchedness did. But, coming to this door to ask for something to satisfy mine hunger, my dear master, for whom I shall bless God to all eternity, called me in, and told me, that I was in the high way to eternal destruction; all misery here, and all misery hereafter; and told me, it would be far better for me to be fixed in some sober family, and stick to some honest business. Said I, Sir, I fancy nobody will take me. Will you tarry with me, said he, and be faithful? I said I would. But oh, the pains he took with me! he taught me to read; he was night and day instructing me; he told me how I was born in sin, and under the curse, and that I had by my repeated sins added much to my guilt: he told me that Jesus Christ was the only sacrifice for sin, the only saviour of sinners; and that he was exceeding gracious: he told me it was the work of the Holy Spirit to create a new heart, convert the soul, and sanctify it: always would he be speaking to me of Christ's love and grace; and praying for me,

and putting me upon prayer alone, and telling me what great reason I had to bemoan myself. And, that I be not tedious, I must say, that my poor soul was struck with convictions quickly, sometimes under great concern, at other times more at ease, then under horror, because I was so thoughtless and easy: then a word my master did often repeat to me, would ring in my heart, *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven*: then under amazing horror, for, thought I, what can I do towards such a work as that? But one time, as I was in our barn, under great concern, pouring out my soul before God, with precious power in my heart I felt that word, *of his own will begat he us with the word of truth*. I found my soul melted down; I was willing to receive, and be saved by Christ; and with that, *him that cometh I will in no wise cast out*, encouraged my soul. This I meant by being born again.

Yefan. Young man, we thank you, and now return what you wished might attend us, *mercy and truth be with you*. Well, what amazing methods God takes to bring his own to himself, and under what variety of circumstances! This young man seemed to be a long while under a work that looks only like a preparatory one; and then when the work appeared to be of the right kind, it was not under hearing the word: but still, so long as the work is but effected, blessed be God for it. But landlord, the preacher desired we would ask you how you were reached by grace?

Landlord. Gentlemen, said he, you see I am not an old man; I was born of christian parents, who were both converted in hearing the blessed Simon Zelotes preach, not long before he suffered martyrdom for Christ. Ever since I remember, my father at proper seasons, and my mother almost always would be instilling something about my sinful nature, the sinfulness of sin, Christ's love in dying for sinners, and salvation through his blood unto me; and small con-

cern about all these things, and acquaintance with them, grew up with me. As to my morals, there was always a restraint upon me; but under all I found the workings of corruption, and saw that had I been left unto myself, I should have been vile as the vilest: and often by reason of this, and considering the many advantages that attended me, the means used with me, and their effect upon me, I have groaned earnestly, under a sense of my being the greatest sinner in the whole world; and so I believe I certainly am, all things being considered. Many scriptures were made of use to me, to shew me my pollution by nature, that I was born in sin, that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelt no good thing, and that whatever is born of the flesh is flesh: fully from scripture convinced of the justice of God, and the necessity of its being satisfied, or no salvation; entirely persuaded that Christ did fulfil all righteousness, and that there is salvation in no other; and also fully convinced of the necessity of a real change of nature, by the Holy Spirit, or no going to glory. I find, through grace, I hate sin, I loath myself, I would have no righteousness to appear in before God but Christ's, I venture all upon him, I love him, I love his service dearer than my life. And, through grace, at different times he does so fill me with the joys of his communion, that my cup runs over. His love constrains me, I obey him not as a slave, but in a filial spirit; I hope I shall, in this spirit, worship him so long as I live, and wait for his glory. But what was the beginning of God's real work upon my heart, and when it was, is what I do not know, nor do expect to know in this world. This is what I know, by nature I was blind, and through grace I now see.

At supper they had pleasant talk, and after family-worship, wished each other good repose. *Dewi* and *Yefan*, in their own room, cheerfully blessed God for the day, committed themselves and theirs to his grace;

and morning being come, arose and worshipped, and prepared themselves for their journey. They went to take their leave of the bishop *Ffyddlon*, who gave them a Greek Bible a-piece, several books of the Old and New Testament, of his own translation into the British tongue; and also a system of Divinity of his own drawing up, together with his own experience at large; accompanied them to the inn, worshipped God with them there, told them their hands were upon the plough, encouraging them to go on in the strength of the Lord. They made him becoming returns of gratitude, and earnestly desired him to come and visit them as soon as possible, and told him where he might find them. Said he, I hope, if the Lord will, in less than two months' time to see you. And so with many tears, and the most tender embraces, they parted, begging of each other a constant remembrance before the throne of grace.

NEOPHYTUS. An amazing heart-affecting story all of it! But you told us they were baptized, and gave us no account of their being received into church-fellowship: what, did not the bishop look upon baptism to be a church-ordinance?

EPENETUS. If he had, he must have received them into church-fellowship first, and then must have baptized no where but in church-assembly: but the examples of the Ennuch, the Jailer, and others made this case plain beyond controversy: it may be called an ordinance pertaining to christianity, but not strictly a church-ordinance. But this company may perhaps find some occasion to consider this hereafter.

THEOPH. Oh, EPENETUS, how do I long to hear this story out! How was it with them by the way? How were they received at home? How did they lay themselves out in the service of their Lord and Master when in their families, and among their acquaintance? What success did attend them? Was there a church speedily gathered? And how was it ordered?

EPENETUS. I have been the longer upon this story, because of the great use God made of the men afterwards. But being mounted, they thought they had no business further: they had found what God had brought them from home for: and now they turn face towards *Caerhudd*, are new men, have new fears, new joys, new designs, are seemingly in a new world, all things are become new: and though but earthen vessels, God had now put a treasure into them more valuable than the universe: and so homeward they move. Their wives and families, oh, their wives and families now lie near them: their relations, friends, and acquaintance, they now have a thousand thoughts about. And after one day's journey, they blamed themselves much they did not urge the preacher to go home with them, thinking he might be of immediate use to their nearest ones at home, as yet in heathenism, for whom they had the most ardent wishes, and about whom the most oppressing fears; they talked of returning for him, but seeing he had promised a visit in some short time, they thought they would wait for it; and in the mean time do what they could for Christ. But I see time will fail us, our families will quickly want us, else I thought to have told you their struggles for Christ in their families, and among their acquaintance; and how God did speedily bless their endeavours, of which I should give some account, for the conversion of many; so that when *Ffyddlon* came to see them, he found so many lively stones, fit for the spiritual building, that he immediately put them upon entering into church-fellowship together: which, for matter and form, officers, and order, I should also relate, together with some of their trials and their comforts: all which you may demand of me, if the Lord will, at a time convenient; but I think, for the present, I have sufficiently tired you.

CHRISTOPH. Oh, my dear **EPENETUS**, I could hear it till midnight, and so I judge of all my neigh-

hours here present; but as time is elapsed, and other duties call, I heartily thank you for what you have gone through, and earnestly desire to hear the story out, and hope the next time we shall be all here a little sooner to attend upon it. Brethren and neighbours, the best of blessings surround and fill you! And with such valedictions they parted.

THE END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE II.

Dewi and Yefan at the Inn on the Road, aim at the Conversion of the Landlord and his Family, who obstinately despises Christianity. They are greatly grieved, but in the Morning surprised with a good Work upon Edgar: who goes with them, and that day meets his brother Cradog a Christian. They all arrive at Caerludd. Dewi's Wife and Servants immediately converted. Yefan's great Trial in his Wife. His great Endeavours. The wonderful success at a public Meeting appointed for Disputation. Ffyddlon the Bishop comes to Caerludd: Baptizes many: Puts them upon Church-Fellowship: Stays with them, and preaches to them for some time.

CHRISTOPHILUS.

PROVIDENCE favoring us with a second opportunity, our beloved EPHENETUS, we beg you would proceed in your story. You left the two gentlemen, and a great deal of our expectation along with them, on the road; now I hope you will carry them and us forward to *Caerludd*.

EPHENETUS. I told you how they blamed themselves they did not take *Ffyddlon*, the preacher, along with them: but seeing he had promised them a visit, they would wait, and do what they could for Christ in the

mean time. Their hearts were filled with love to Christ, and pity to their fellow-sinners, which made them eager to serve: therefore that night on the road, they desired their landlord would sup with them, that they might have an opportunity of taking some work in hand for their Lord. *Yefan* stood up, and in a very solemn manner, gave the eternal God thanks for his amazing mercies to them on their journey, leading them to look to Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls, bringing them in safety so far, providing food for the refreshment of their bodies, and earnestly desired the blessing of heaven upon every crumb and drop prepared for them; that the Spirit of the Lord would guide and bless their conversation, and enable them while they had breath and being, cheerfully and faithfully to serve their dear Redeemer. Having helped themselves, they discoursed both in their turns of the bounty of Providence, of the wonders of the Redeemer's love, the salvation of sinners through his blood, and the effectual application thereof by the Holy Spirit; and asked their landlord what thoughts he had of religion, and how he relished the things they discoursed of?

Landlord. Gentlemen, says the landlord, whose name was *Bydol*, I never trouble my mind about religion, but take it as my ancestors delivered it to me: they knew, doubtless, what they did, but never looked upon religion as any great part of their business: and as for the things you have been discoursing of, they are things I never heard before, nor do I now understand them, but hope I may be happy enough without any acquaintance with them; I understand you are of that new sect, which is every where spoken against: but, gentlemen, you are nevertheless welcome to me; you know I am a landlord, and you know I should carry it handsomely to every body.

Dewi. Oh, my poor fellow-sinner! with all my heart I pity your case. I was not long since as re

gardless of religion as you can be; had very few thoughts concerning a future state, and none at all upon religious, required, and acceptable worship of God in this life: but when God was pleased to convince me of his greatness, and my wretchedness, I was made to conclude that religion should be the greatest concern of my life; and that without it I could not enjoy true pleasure here, nor felicity hereafter. It is out of pure pity to your soul, and the souls of those under your roof, that we took up at this table a religious discourse, hoping some word of truth might be blessed for your eternal advantage. It would profit you nothing, if you could gain all Britain, and lose your own soul; and I earnestly beg you would receive, even what reason, if attended to, will suggest to you, that you are a sinner; that the eternal God must be perfect; that satisfaction therefore must be made to divine justice injured by your sin; that by your best obedience for time to come, you can never make amends for offences past; for 'tis a debt you on another account owe to God, that no sacrifices nor oblations of any earthly kind can possibly satisfy the eternal God, for the sin of man; that therefore it must be something that reason can't reach, that must take away your sin, and save your soul; which, according to the revelation of God, is the mediation of his own Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Bydol. Gentlemen, all good nature commands me to be thankful, for the pity you express to one you apprehend to be in misery; but I am not in such a case as you imagine; am sorry you give yourself needless trouble, and assure you, that your silence, concerning such affairs, will greatly oblige your humble servant. And so he withdrew.

THEOPH. Poor hearts! at their very entrance into the work! upon the very first attempt to be so repulsed! How unpleasant, yea, how discouraging must it be to them! They aimed at his heart, and he turned away

his ear; they aimed at his felicity, and he stubbornly embraced his misery. Though his business laid him under the strongest obligations to be civil and courteous, his aversion to eternal goodness, and his own happiness, made him rude and unkind. The deep degeneracy of man!

PHILAL. Though this was unpleasant, it was instructing: they might here see and consider perhaps more than before, the enmity of the carnal mind, which at all adventures will oppose the chiefest good; and they might here observe how the scriptures are fulfilled; and also take the greater occasion to praise and adore distinguishing grace to their own souls; for had they been left to themselves, when they went out of curiosity to hear *Ffyddion* preach, they would have turned all into ridicule and reproach. Perhaps this trial upon them, might be of great use to them afterwards. But I want to know how those poor young soldiers bore it?

EPENETUS. They were struck dumb, hung down their heads, quickly finished their supper, in a few words owned the goodness of God, the sinfulness of man, their own weakness and unworthiness, and desired God to have mercy on poor sinners who had destroyed themselves, and give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth: and now they thought fit to retire to their chamber, having another unexpected turn to converse upon; and doors being shut, said

Dewi. Oh! *Yefan*, *Yefan*, what is this! Did our Lord call us to this work? Is it our duty to speak of his name to our poor fellow-sinners? Why did he not own the attempt, who could have made it effectual? By what we have said the man is hardened, and by what appears I am deeply discouraged.

Yefan. I own 'tis very shocking; I did not expect it: but this I am sure of, that it is our duty, who have found mercy, to recommend it to our fellow-sinners in

misery; if they receive it, and rely upon it, then a soul is saved from death; and what a glorious deliverance is then by grace wrought! But if they reject it, we shew what the grace of God puts us upon, and they discover the depravity of degenerate nature; where we may also learn what we have in our hearts, and how amazing, distinguishing grace, has visited us.

Dewi. But there is one thing that now fills me with dread; I have a wife at home I dearly love, her temper I know, her spirit is high, never conquered with any thing; her salvation I greatly desire; and I know there is salvation in none but Christ; and speak of him to her I must, if I live; but though I long to be at home, yet I dread it, lest all my poor endeavours for her good, shall meet with the most violent opposition, and the comfort of my life, lost and gone. My children, indeed, are small; as yet, not capable of receiving nor resisting; but the slight this man puts upon us, and the best tidings we could tell him, does, when I consider what may befall me at home, tear my heart.

Yefan. I pity your case; but I have that to comfort me; my wife is as kind a creature as lives; always studies to oblige me, is never provoked with any rough carriage of mine, but immediately wins my heart with smiles and kindness; does advise with me in whatever she undertakes, and what I think most proper she always complies with: and as I shall look upon it my duty to spread salvation only in Christ before her, I make no great doubt but she will cheerfully receive the glad tidings of life, and immediately worship her Redeemer. I long to tell her all, that she and I may rejoice together in the Lord; and if your spouse should appear stubborn, I and mine I hope will do all we can to assist you in godly desires, and endeavours for her eternal good.

Then they committed themselves and theirs, and the

whole interest of christianity, in prayer, to the God of all grace, mourned over the non-success in their poor endeavours for the good of their fellow-sinners, begged they might see the work of the Lord, as his poor unworthy servants, and his glory upon their children; and particularly requested of God, that their very nearest relations might quickly receive the salvation of God: and so went to rest.

They got up very early next morning, committed themselves and theirs to the Lord, begging that all safety might attend them in their journey, that they might visit their habitations, and not sin; that their great designs for the conversion of sinners, and especially their nearest relations, might be favored with immediate and encouraging success. They presently got ready, and just as they were going to mount, a young man of the family fell at their feet, with his face on the ground, and aloud cried out *Mercy*, and could say no more, but cried and sobbed as if his heart would break, and with his hands had hold of *Dewi's* feet. Young man, says *Dewi*, what is the matter with you? What is the matter? After a little time, he recovered himself, and lifting up one hand from the ground, said, Gentlemen, as ever you have obtained mercy, have mercy on me. They asked the landlord, who was there present, whether the young man was delirious? He answered, that he had been with him now several months, and he never observed any thing like it in him. Then said *Yefan*, Young man, what would you have? What can we do for you? He answered, Let me but go with you, to the meanest service you can put me to; if I can but wash the feet of your servants, I shall think myself happy. Said *Dewi*, with tears in his eyes, What makes you desire this of us? get up, and speak.

Edgar, for that was his name, answered, Gentlemen, last night while you were at supper, I stood behind a door at some distance from you, and being

desirous to hear strangers discourse, gave attention; and while you, sir, were discoursing of the sinful condition of the children of men, I found my heart sinking as guilty; but when you spoke of God as perfect, that evil should not dwell with him, and that he was a consuming fire, and of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity, there was like an arrow entered my heart, and there it sticks; dear sirs, I am ruined and undone: only you said there was a Saviour for sinners; which word has all this night filled me with the most earnest desires to know him, and be saved by him: I never had such a night in my life; terrors and fears have laid upon me all the night; nor had I the least inclination to sleep; but your word of a Saviour was some support to me, with a Who can tell but he may be my Saviour?

Yefan. Pray, landlord, is he a relation of your's, or an hired servant?

Landlord. Neither, sir, only some months ago he called here, and asked me to take him in, which I did, employed him in what he could do, and maintained him: he is neither bound to me, nor I to him, nor have I any demands upon him at all.

Yefan. Pray, young man, are your parents living; who, and where are they?

Edgar. Sir, my father and mother bore arms under Boadicia, in her revenges upon the Romans; but when Suetonius defeated the Britons, my father and mother fell among the slain; and I a poor young boy was carried away among the captives, and made a present of to an officer of note named Flavius, in the second legion Augusta, at *Caerusk*; I quickly learned the Roman tongue, and my master being a gentleman bred at Athens, and very kind to me, took great delight to instruct me in the Greek tongue; to which I am not altogether a stranger: but my master dying, I was turned up to my liberty, and not inclining the field, nor noise of arms, I wandered in pursuit of

some honest, peaceable rural employment; and have here served my master, in whatever I was put to, now for some time. I am, dear gentlemen, a poor fatherless, motherless, friendless lad; but if I could but hope, that the Saviour you spoke of, would save me from my sins, and make me happy with his friendship here, and glory with him hereafter, I should not be very careful what circumstances of meanness and affliction I passed through in this world: acquaintance with the Saviour I want; here is nobody knows him; you say he has graciously revealed himself to you; and therefore, for his sake, if I may use such an expression, take me with you. For tears he could say no more.

Ay, gentlemen, says the landlord, with a scoff and a sneer, you may take him. The gentlemen were both greatly affected; tears in their eyes, but did all they could to refrain; at last says *Yefan*, We have never a horse for him to ride on: the youth hearing, said, Sir, trouble not yourself, with help from heaven, and your leave, I hope to be at *Caerludd*, without a horse, perhaps, as soon as you: only let me know where to find you. They informed him of that, and where they intended to bait that day; and put in his pocket what they thought necessary: and all set out.

CHRISTOPH. Amazing wonders of grace! It may be well said of our Redeemer, that his ways are past finding out! What providential turns passed over this youth! To this place he must be brought, behind the door he must stand, attention he must give, and the word must enter his heart, that was aimed at the heart of another. What sovereign, gracious, infallible power directed and applied it!

THEOPH. And I am thinking how encouraging this must be to the two gentlemen, who were so dejected the night before; who thought all their labour was in vain: now God gave them an early token that his word shall not return void, but prosper according to his purpose who sent it.

PHILAL. And very instructing unto them for the future how to work for God, plant and water, and leave the increase to him. Let them blow the trumpet, and God will gather his people one by one; though to all human appearance, they are ready to perish. But we have interrupted the story.

EPENETUS. I told you they set out; and I must now say, they set out rejoicing, that God had blessed them, as they verily believed, for the conversion of one; they cast the net of the gospel, they caught one; they were saved by grace, they were honoured with service, they thought, and that justly, they could never be thankful enough; they hoped also, this was an earnest to them of greater service, and the first fruits of a desirable harvest. The work of God was warm upon their hearts, and all the way, in some respect or other, their lips did shew forth his praise. When they came to the place, where they designed to refresh themselves, they saw *Edgar* was got in before them, who with all the thankfulness a countenance could discover, or a heart contain, waited upon them; they ordered him into the dining room, and while their dinner was a getting,

Yefan said, O *Edgar*,! what amazing grace has followed you, in providences past; and especially now in discovering to you, your undone condition by reason of sin, and putting you upon enquiries after the Saviour. Know then, that he is the Son of God, and yet made of a woman, and born of her; two distinct natures in one person. According to his divine nature, he is the eternal God without beginning; according to his human nature, he was the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, the seed of David, but born of the Virgin Mary, not one hundred years since: gave many evident and infallible proofs, that he was the promised Saviour; and according as it was written of him, was cut off, but not for himself; he underwent the strokes of God's justice, and man's

indignation, that his blood might wash away the sins of his poor sinful people, and that his obedience even unto death, might be reckoned unto them for righteousness: he was delivered for their offences, and rose from the dead for their justification: he ascended up to heaven in the sight of his disciples; he is at the Father's right hand; he makes intercession there for the transgressors; is able to save to the uttermost; encourages the vilest of sinners to venture their salvation upon him alone, and says, *him that cometh I will in no wise cast out*; oh, poor *Edgar*, this is our Beloved, this is our Friend.

Edgar. Then, come life, come death, he shall be my Beloved, and my Friend; I venture my perishing soul upon him alone, and desire I may trust him with all my salvation, under every circumstance, so long as I live; and that all my life may be a life of holiness, thankfulness, and service: blessed be God for the Saviour, and blessed be God for you both; and blessed be God that ever I was brought to see and hear you: and I must add, blessed be God who made your word reach my heart; for if it had not been for his effectual grace, I had been like my master, and the rest of the family. With many tears those things were spoke and heard. But dinner comes; they owned the goodness of God, and begged his blessing on their food; refreshed themselves, and returned thanks; sat awhile after dinner, and *Edgar*, having had no rest the night before, and having walked pretty many miles, fell asleep.

In the mean time comes a young man to their door, and humbly spoke to them as follows: Gentlemen, excuse me, I am a young man willing to work, but am out of business at present, and make bold to offer my service to either of you that may please to employ me. They asked him what service he was capable of? he answered, according to his strength, any thing of husbandry. They said, they were citizens, and had no

concern that way: but how came you to be out of service, it looks as if you were not a good servant, else surely you would not want a master? He replied, that his last master never laid negligence nor unfaithfulness to his charge; and yet there was one thing for which he would not keep him. This made the gentlemen very desirous to know what that was; and the youth's backwardness made them more eager: at last he said, My master was afraid I was a christian. And are you then a christian said they? He answered, I am afraid I am not. They asked, where were his parents? He said, They were slain in the wars; they asked whether he had brothers or sisters? he answered, he had only one brother, which he believed was slain also; they asked him his name, and what was his brother's name? he answered, that his brother's name was *Edgar*, and that his own name was *Cradog*. They quickly awoke their young man, and asked him, Had you ever a brother? he answered, that once he had one, whose name was *Cradog*, but he believed he was killed the same time as his parents were. Then said *Dewi*, Pray, young men, look one at another.

They immediately knew each other, they rejoiced, they embraced, they wept in each other's bosom, and did not know how nor when to end; upon which *Yefan* said, If natural affection is so powerful in poor sinners, what must the compassion, kindness, and love of our Lord be, who is the first-born among many brethren! When they had for some little time refrained, and with the greatest pleasure looking on each other, each wishing in his heart the other was but a christian, but how to speak any thing about it they could not tell: at last, says *Dewi*, What a sight is here! brethren met, and discovering the depth of fraternal love; well assured they are brethren, and yet doubtless wish they were brethren, but are both afraid they are not brethren! *Yefan* replied, And what a saying is here! pray what do you mean? you seem to

speak contradictions. They know not that they are brethren in christianity, says *Dewi*. Upon this, new passions arose, tears of joy did flow, and the most tender embraces follow: What! my brother a christian! one said, and the other said. The whole was affecting. When this passion was also a little over, says *Cradog*, Are these two gentlemen christians? Yes, says *Edgar*, and the blessed means of my conversion to christianity; and I am but new-born. And we, says *Yefan*, are not much older: but, *Cradog*, I pray, in a few words, tell us how the work of God began upon you.

Cradog. Gentlemen, it was by means of a fellow-servant of mine, who was a christian. It began thus: One day, at plough, he holding and I driving; I was very merry, singing and whistling, says he to me, *Cradog*, you have no great cause to be so merry, if you knew all. Why, said I, what have I done, that I should not be merry? Says he, What good thing have you done, and if you knew yourself, what evil thing have you not done? towards satisfying the injured justice of God, you can do nothing, nor can all the world help you; therefore I say you are undone. Every word went to my soul; I said nothing, but I had done singing for that day; he thought I was angry with him, and therefore towards evening said to me, that he would not have me be angry with him, for what he spoke was out of good will, and that he greatly desired my poor soul might be eternally happy. I told him, I was not angry, but with many tears I told him, that if my case was such as he said, and I was afraid it was, I was so undone that there was no room for desires after my happiness. Then he told me there was a Saviour who came to seek and to save that which was lost, and that even those who had destroyed themselves, should find help in him. I desired to know who he was? He told me it was Jesus Christ, in whom he trusted, and whom he worshipped night

and day. He took me with him, prayed with me, prayed for me, instructed me more particularly concerning my original corruption, and actual sins; and would be always speaking to me about Christ, the glory of his person, the wonders of his love, the fruits of his death, the efficacy of his grace, and the glory of his gospel; though he said he knew but little. My master upon observing how diligent he was to turn others to christianity, turned him off: and after some time, because I would not renounce Jesus Christ, turned me off also. I am a poor weak creature, but I dare trust the salvation of my soul with none but Jesus Christ, come life or death; every thing else is vain. But I am not without many fears.

The gentlemen heard him with a great deal of pleasure, and his brother with many tears: but, says *Yefan*, come, let us go; for I long to be at home; and, young man, says he to *Cradog*, you may accompany your brother, and come both to my house, till we shall order your abode and service, to our satisfaction, and your best advantage; which made both the young men bow themselves towards the earth, admire the merciful providence of God, and own they wanted words to express their thankfulness unto both the gentlemen.

CHRISTOPH. What surprising soul-pleasing variety there is in the very same work of grace! Regeneration is the same in all, faith and evangelical hope the same for kind in all; but some are reached under a sermon, one under one part of it, another under another; some converted under the instructions of tender parents they know not when or how; some under the kind endeavours of godly masters, and some by the talk of their fellow servants; some behind the door, and some in the open field: but unto all that believe, Christ is precious. But I suppose now they are drawing towards home; I want to know how they were received, and especially how it fared with poor *Dewi*, who was not without dread about it.

EPENETUS. And therefore seeing I must now divide my story, I shall begin with him. They all got to town betimes: and at parting expressed a thousand wishes for each other's success in the great work of their Redeemer's kingdom; and as for *Dewi*, he entered his own house, with joy and trembling heart, hands and eyes lifted up to heaven; his wife in the most tender manner welcomed him home, his servants made obeisance, and his little children in a fond manner flocked to him; and after heart affecting tokens of his love and tenderness to his wife and children, he in the greatest earnestness with eyes and hands to heaven said, Send now prosperity, O Lord!

His wife, whose name was *Gweddus*, under some astonishment, cried out, My dear, what is the matter with you? Are you not well, or have you not had a prosperous journey?

Dewi. My dear, I never had such a journey in my life, and I hope I can say, through grace, I never was so well in my life: I went out rich, I come home poor; I went out poor, I come home very rich; I went out alive, I come home dead; I went out dead and come home alive; and shall live for ever.

Gweddus. My dear, I am frightened, you are crazed, I am ruined and your children too. Oh! let me know how it is.

Dewi. My dear, be not frightened, I am well, have the free use of sense and reason, and expressed myself so, to prepare your attention to what I shall further say: wherein you shall find every part of what I said strictly true. I went out rich in my own esteem, reckoning my good deeds, as I esteemed them, a valuable treasure to merit eternal happiness withal; but I met with that abroad which effectually convinced me, I never did one perfect good deed in my life, the best righteousness of mine, being but as filthy rags; whereupon I reckoned all as loss and dung, and so come home poor. I went from home really poor and

wretched and naked, having never a good work to recommend me to God; and come home cloathed with the righteousness of a glorious Redeemer, in whom all things are mine; for in him the eternal God is my portion. I went out alive, thinking myself entitled to life eternal as much as any body whatever; but that hope is slain, and I am dead to that law: I went out dead in sins and trespasses, but the eternal God has been pleased to quicken me, I have heard the voice of God, and shall live. And now, my dear, in the most fervent affection and love, earnestly desiring your poor soul may partake of the same happiness, I will tell you how this was effected.

And upon this, he enters upon the story of his conversion at *Hyfrydle*, the anguish of mind he went through, and the reason of it, and the method God was pleased to take to inform his judgment, and subdue his will, and comfort his soul at last. But long before he finished what he had to say, he saw how it was with his poor wife; first he saw her attention quickened, then cheeks glowing, and tears flowing; and at last she cries out, And is there hope for such a one as I? Will that blessed Redeemer receive me? And will he receive these children? The servants also cried out, for they by their master's order were present all the while, What shall we do to be saved? Great was their cry under distress; and many were his tears of joy; he spoke comfortably to his wife; then spoke encouragingly to his servants. And being now greatly encouraged in his soul, he said, Come let us worship the true God in the glorious Redeemer the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to seek and to save sinners; and thereupon he prayed with them all, and for them all, and the spirit of God, he being in God's way, was greatly with him: and his wife and servants believed.

Gweddus. My dear, what wonderful grace is this! Did I expect salvation? or did I at all desire it? When

my dear husband went from home, could I have thought of his bringing such a treasure with him! blessed be God to all eternity for this journey and the fruits of it. I here renounce all vain heathenish customs and confidences; and betake myself to this precious Redeemer only. The word you said concerning this Redeemer's coming into the world to save, I fully receive; and that there is salvation in no other, I do without hesitation conclude, and cast my poor perishing soul upon him. But what of these children, *Dewi*, what of these children?

Dewi. I can never be thankful enough to the Lord for his grace to you; many a distressful thought have I had by the way, especially since I saw how the landlord where we lodged last night rejected the tidings of life, but now through mercy I rejoice to see how the Lord has made you willing in this day of his power. And as for these dear children, they are the heritage of our Redeemer; he is our God, and he says he is the God of our seed; now we are called by grace, the promise is unto us, and to our children; for our blessed Redeemer stands up for the children of his people, and says, that their's is the kingdom of heaven.

They rejoiced together in God; and when the table was spread for their refreshment, *Dewi*, in a very evangelical manner, blessed God, and desired his blessing on the food his providence had prepared; and desired now they might all their time in faith and filial fear eat and drink to the glory of their gracious Saviour. This also was a new thing to his wife and servants, but what they now thought exceeding agreeable. They could hardly eat for joy: Christ was all the subject of their discourse; on him they fed; it was the kindness of their youth. After refreshment, *Dewi* returned thanks to God, for his unspeakable gift, his dear Son, and for all mercies of a spiritual and of a temporal nature through him. And then he

desired his wife, seeing it was not yet very late, to take a walk with him to see his dear friend *Yefan*, who was also converted to christianity: but while they were discoursing of this, who comes in but *Yefan*, with a countenance not very cheerful; says

Dewi. Brother, see what God has wrought! My wife and servants have received Christ, and we have been worshipping him together: I can never be thankful enough for this work of God to all eternity. How is it at home with you?

Yefan. Ah, my dear friend, a new trial attends me, which I am afraid will be a trial to the end of my days. I found my wife and family through mercy well, and no person in the world could, with greater joy and kindness, receive a near relation upon a return from a journey, than she received me. Oh the tenderness and gladness expressed in all endeared tokens! Whereupon with cheerfulness I told her, that this was the best journey that ever I had in my life, for I had found a pearl of great price, more valuable than all the world, that I had heard the gospel preached, and that I was made to believe in Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners, and that I now looked upon it my duty to mention the glory of my Redeemer to her, that she also might believe, and rejoice with me in the salvation of God. And are you then a christian? said she. I answered that I was, by the grace of God, and by the same grace should remain so till death. Then she replied, that all her comfort was for ever at an end; and wished a thousand times I had never gone from home. Then in the most tender manner, I prayed her to hear my experience of the work of God, how I was convinced of the wretched state I was in by nature, and how God was pleased to lead me to venture my poor perishing soul upon Christ, and what comfort and peace I have had since. With a countenance discovering the greatest indignation, she replied, Not I; I'll hear none of your *cant*, and as for peace and comfort, I

am certain I shall have no share therein. Oh unhappy woman! Oh poor unhappy children! And upon that withdrew, and I suppose is shut up in her closet; nor do I know when I shall see her. I never did see any thing like this temper in her in my life. And as for the two poor young men, they are come, and sit in our kitchen tired, and seem much dejected at our present distraction. The Father of mercies have mercy upon me and mine!

Dewi. Come, my dear *Yefan*, be not cast down, you know more of the things of God than I do; but I know that power belongs to him and mercy also. And is he not infinitely wise to know how and when to work? God has a mind to try your faith; he knew mine was too weak to bear a trial; therefore he favored me wonderfully; but I hope he has as great things in reserve for you, and takes this way to make them the sweeter to you when they come. If you please we will send for the two young men hither for the present, my wife and family through wonderful mercy will be glad to see them.

They were sent for, they came, the 53rd chapter of Isaiah was read, *Dewi* and *Yefan* both prayed: in thanksgiving the first abounded; and in earnest wrestlings with God the other. And then earnestly wished each other a good night.

THEOPH. How does God disappoint the thoughts of the children of men! and especially when they are too confident in the flesh. *Yefan* gave his wife a wonderful good word, and may be she might deserve all that he said, but he was quickly taught that he had too much confidence in the flesh, and that good temper and mildness will appear as averse to real christianity and powerful religion, as the most rough and surly tempers in the universe. There is nothing in the most engaging natural tempers, that disposes the owners thereof towards faith; yea, nothing but what is ready on all occasions to make the strongest oppo-

sition to faith. Faith is the gift of God. But pray go on.

EPENETUS. Next morning, after the worship of God, *Dewi* and his wife made *Yefan* a visit, with a design to assist him under his present distress. By one of the maids word was carried to *Araf*, for that was *Yefan*'s wife's name, that there was a gentlewoman below that wanted to speak with her. When she came down, she was a little surprised to see *Dewi*, but like a gentlewoman, in a handsome manner welcomed him home, spoke very kindly to his spouse, and intreated them both to take their seats. When they had so done, *Gweddus* says, Madam, this has been a wonderful journey to your spouse and mine; not only brought home safe, but converted to christianity, the only religion of divine appointment and acceptance: and I must own amazing grace to me in bringing me to venture the salvation of my soul upon Jesus the Christ; and my husband and I are come to wait upon you, to give you some account of the dealings of God with us; hoping it may be of use for your present and eternal good.

Araf. Madam, I am very much obliged to you that you should have my happiness so at heart, and return you thanks for your kind offer; but beg you would not take it ill, that at present I refuse your assistance. If my husband has any thing to say at time convenient, I design to hear him with more patience than I did last night; but if he brings persons to assist him, I must take the liberty to say that it is reasonable I should have whom I please to assist me. Therefore at present let me desire we may have no discourse about religion.

Upon this they took up a little time in common discourse, and parted; but when they were gone, *Araf* put herself in her husband's way, that he might take his opportunity if he would; which he accordingly did, and they both sat down, and he began:

My dear, I take it as a favor that you are willing to hear me give some account of the dealings of God with my soul: I went out of mere curiosity to hear the preacher of christianity, fully resolved not only to reject but to deride whatever I should hear; but ere I was aware, a power more than human, took hold of my heart, I was convinced and cut down before it, and—But here she interrupted, and said, My dear, excuse me, I beg you would not trouble me with any thing you *felt* or *fancied*; if you have any thing you can *rationally* offer against your old religion, and for your new, let me hear it. You know it is a turn in your life, that calls for the strongest truth, and the clearest reason to support it. You used to set a value upon the esteem of my relations, and you will most certainly throw yourself for ever under their frowns: you take upon you to be wiser than the greatest men in Britain, even our Flamins, and Arch-Flamins; and instead of providing honorably for your family, you do, as I persuade myself, run the ready road to their ruin.

Yefan. Then, my dear, observe, my old religion shut me up from the knowledge of the true God; even in Athens, the eye of the heathen world, there is an alter to the *unknown* God; but christianity directs me to the knowledge of the true God; his divine perfections, and how to worship him with acceptance. My old religion kept me from acquaintance with myself, and actions, but in the light of christianity I see what I am, and what I do. My old religion had only some perplexing inquiries after the chiefest good, but could never discover it; but in christianity, I see it, and enjoy it. My old religion frightened and perplexed me with the transmigration of souls; but in christianity I see that happy souls pass immediately to Christ into heavenly glory; and shall, in due time, have their own bodies again. My old religion led to trifling or cruel sacrifices, which the eternal God did never, and

as reason tells me, could never accept of, as atonements for the sins of men; but christianity discovers unto me, that sacrifice which God himself did appoint, and has accepted, and wherein my soul finds rest. As to your relations, next to your love, and my children's duty, I covet their friendship; but religion must be above all; as to the Flamins and Arch-Flamins, whose religion is their great revenue; they are never like to receive and own the truth, that must in the end destroy their beneficial trade: and as for the things of this life, the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; and with him I leave myself and mine, and am easy.

Araf. If you can make good but the principal part of what you said, I promise you it will be no difficulty to make me a christian; and seeing you are so set upon my conversion, I give you leave to set upon the work as soon as you please.

Then said *Yefan*, Now my dear; and began upon the knowledge of the true God; as he went along, she always threw in his way objections she thought fit, and he removed them as well as he could; but it took up more days than one to go through the whole, a particular account of the debate, the design of my story will not bear; only I must observe, that this tedious trial proved of great use to *Yefan*. However, at the conclusion of it, she said, Will you agree to a conference with my father, brothers, and some other acquaintance upon these things? fix a day, and bring with you whom you please; our great dining-room I think a place convenient, and there I hope to hear you out. *Yefan* answered, Agreed, my dear, fix your day, procure your men.

SYLLOGISTICUS. I can't help admiring the grace of God, even in perplexing trials and disappointments! What a glorious design runs through and appears upon all Providence! The father of lights helped him to reason in such a manner as he did; and by reasoning

the same power and grace improved his rational powers, for further and future usefulness. This hard study his wife put him upon, proved to him perhaps as profitable as if he had reasoned daily in the schools.

THEOPH. But seeing family-worship is very precious to a believer, and doubtless being a converted man, his heart must be for worshipping the God of the families of Israel: pray how did he do?

EPENETUS. The second night he stood resolved upon it, and having sent for *Cradog*, and fixed him in his house and service, he baulked no part of God's worship; solemnly craved a blessing, and gave thanks at table; and after supper, he calls his family, and said, I think it my duty to own the eternal God my Redeemer; he makes it my duty, as a master in my family, to command my children and servants to attend divine worship with me; I shall then go before you in reading a part of his word, and calling upon his name: whereupon his wife, in a civil manner, took her leave of him and withdrew: it went to his soul; but he made her a bow, and sent up a sigh to heaven. Thus he kept on worshipping God with his family, night and morning, notwithstanding the discouragements that did lie hard upon him. But *Cradog* was of vast service; his master had the pleasure quickly to see all the servants converted.

Well, the fixed day drew on; and *Dewi* and *Yefan* spent the day before, in humbling their souls in fasting and prayer, before the Lord, at *Dewi's* house, and *Edgar* and *Cradog* were with them; *Dewi's* family were also present: they offered up many strong cries and tears that day; but *Yefan's* wife, poor heart, thought they were together somewhere consulting what arguments to use, and how to defend them; but their business was with God.

The appointed time came; her father and brothers were present, and pretty many acquaintance who were desired to be there, and several others, who had heard

of it and desired they might be admitted, so that the large room was full. The christians had prayed before they came thither; and *Yefan* stood up and spoke, and vast attention was given, taking an open Bible in his hand, said, *The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ, he is Lord of all. How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil: for God was with him. Whom the Jews slew, and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before of God; who did eat and drink with him after he arose from the dead; his servants are commanded to preach unto the people, and that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead. To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.*

Men, brethren, and fathers, said *Yefan*, I was very lately of the number of those who despised, rejected, and derided this blessed Redeemer, and went to hear him preached with a design to scoff; but the eternal God having mercy upon me, was pleased to cause his word to take hold of my heart, and I will now take the freedom to give you a faithful account of that gracious work.——Which he did in a particular manner.

But before he had half done, he observed a mighty attention, and many tears among the people, which added vigour unto his voice, and courage to his soul; and when he had done, he desired *Dewi* to testify what he knew of God and his work.

The old gentleman, *Yefan's* father-in-law, whose name was *Didwyll*, immediately stood up and said, My children, brethren, and friends, I came hither with a design to dispute, and to repel words with words: but now I must own the salvation of Jesus

the Redeemer, adore and worship; I am convinced the words mentioned out of the book, are the words of the most high God, I never heard any thing like them in my life, they came not as the words of men; they carry their own evidence with them. I could not have thought any thing could have been so glorious and powerful; and blessed be the Lord that ever I heard them; I think it my duty now to confess Jesus Christ with my mouth; and I believe in my heart; and this faith came by hearing. As a poor perishing sinner, I cast myself for peace and pardon, and all salvation upon him alone, for ever casting off heathenism, root and branch.

The glory of this was so weighty upon *Yefan's* soul, that he cried out, *Hosannah to the son of David, hosannah in the highest*; and all that were there present, with a loud voice, after him sung the same words, and he saw his poor wife aim at them too. He could hardly stand up under the comfort; he desired *Dewi* to go to prayer, which he did with great enlargedness of soul, abounding in petitions and praises to the eternal God, who had in so gracious a manner visited them all. Great was this day, nor could they tell how to part. They related their experiences, and professed their faith in Jesus; but to relate how it was with *Yefan's* wife, when with thousands of tears she bewailed her unbelief, and admired grace, perhaps may be thought too affecting; as also the joy of her husband, when he heard her say, I desire I may be a believer in Christ.

CHRISTOPH. Such seasons I believe were pretty frequent in the early days of christianity, and though it is but low at present, yet greater seasons hasten, when Zion's children shall make haste, and shall fly as a cloud. But in your accounts I can't help observing, that it is not with *Yefan's* wife, as it was with the rest of the company, but seems dejected: what she judged I know not, but her husband had

great reason to admire the wisdom of gracious encouraging Providence, in over-ruling her unbelief to bring about such an opportunity of work and service. God had took off his sackcloth, and girded him with gladness.

EPENETUS. True; and his wife had great reason of joy too, for God had reached her by his grace; but she could not cheerfully conclude so. The greatness of her unbelief did pierce her soul, and the many methods she used to keep herself a heathen, did lie heavy upon her. She had discovered such aversion to Christ and christianity, that she could not forgive herself; her grieving her husband, and refusing to join in family-worship, now added unto her load, and under a sense of her own inability to believe, she with bitterness thought of what she told her husband, "Make good what you said, and it will be no difficulty to make me a christian." In short, she entertained fears that she was too great a sinner to be saved, at least doubted much whether Jesus Christ would save her or no. So here was fresh work cut out for *Yefan*, to remove the doubts and fears of his wife, and encourage her faith. But this also turned to a good account afterwards.

But I should have told you, that the people were desirous to know what they must do; *Dewi* told them that *Ffyddlon* was expected very quickly, and of him they should more particularly inquire; in the mean time desired them all to meet in the same room the next first day of the week, for, says he, it is the Lord's day, that we may worship him together as he will please to help us. Accordingly they did meet, *Dewi* and *Yefan* prayed, read the scriptures, and according to the best of their ability gave the sense; several more came and were reached by grace; they kept meetings also on week-days, and many gathered to them, and great was the success; so that in a little time there were several scores converted: so mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.

NEOPHYTUS. But you say they read the word, and gave the sense, which some look upon as very ancient, and not disagreeable way of preaching; pray by what authority did they this?

EPENETUS. When there was upon a time a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, they were all scattered abroad, except the apostles, and they that were scattered went every where preaching the word; it was by the same authority they did this. There was a certain Jew named Apollos*, who spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John, though Aquila and Priscilla expounded to him the way of God more perfectly, neither they nor yet the apostles, when they came to know of it, blamed him as one wanting authority; by the same authority with him they taught. And to answer more plainly, it was by the highest authority they did teach their poor fellow-sinners what they themselves knew of the way of salvation. *He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully†.* He who understands the word, and hath felt the saving power of it in the hands of the Holy Spirit hath it; the word of reconciliation is committed to him; then as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God‡.* Do I see a person perishing, and have I not a call from God to do all I can to save him? It is an eternal truth, let persons who value themselves upon ordaining and sending one another, say what they please, that the person to whom God has given gifts and abilities to do good, has certainly a call from God to do it.

* Quo jure quæso iste (Apollo) fungitur ministerio verbi? nisi illo generali et communi. 1 Cor. xiv. Si fidenti revelatum fuerit, prior taceat. *Luth.* Tom. iv. p. 399.

† Jeremiah xxiii. 28.

‡ 1 Peter iv. 10, 11.

NEOPHYTUS. But does not this destroy all gospel-order, so far as it concerns the mission of preachers, either stated or itinerary, and open a door unto any vain person to take upon him that sacred work though never called to it?

EPENETUS. Not at all; the work was necessary, though there was no church as yet to call them thereunto. It is God that calls to the work, and gives ability for it, the church can do nothing in it, but own God's call, and follow him; and this is an orderly manner, as you will hear was done afterwards. But as for vain persons pretending to this work, the sin is theirs, but the church of Christ is safe. A stranger shall not the church follow; the converted shall hear and know the voice of Christ.

THEOPH. My dear NEOPHYTUS, it is God that gives the ability and the authority to preach, and inclines the heart to desire the good work; a church of Christ, in sending any person forth, does but acknowledge this already done. No church in the world can effect any part of it. The regular call of a church, where it may be had, makes the whole, in and among churches, orderly and beautiful, and recommends the person to service and acceptance; but the authority must be from above; otherwise, though a person may boast of being authorized in all the forms and modes from among the children of men, the eternal God will say unto him, What hast thou to do to declare my statutes? Excuse us, beloved EPENETUS, and proceed.

EPENETUS. Sooner than was expected, though not sooner than was desired, *Ffyddlon* comes to town, and with him comes *Tosturiol*, in whose house the bishop lodged, and also the honest godly landlord *Buddiol*, and *Alfred* his man: they were received with the utmost respect and affection; christians were very dear to each other in those days; and after a small refreshment, they worshipped God together at

Yefan's house; *Dewi* and all his family being there; *Dewi's* wife cheerfully confessed her faith in the Redeemer, and *Yefan's* wife, with many tears, and all the freedom she could, declared that she ventured all upon Christ, believing there was salvation no where else; whereupon they both, and all theirs, were baptized straightway. Their servants also, together with *Edgar* and *Cradog*, confessing their faith in the Lord Jesus, were baptized immediately; their little meeting was concluded with prayer and praise, and now, being late, they prepared for rest; and a servant was ordered to inform all the christians, that *Ffyddlon* was come, and was to preach in that room at a certain hour the next day.

NEOPHYTUS. According to this, the children of the godly were baptized from the beginning of christianity.

PHILAL. Without doubt they were; so *Lydia* and her household*; the Jailer and all his straightway†; and *Stephanus's* household‡.

PHILOLOGUS. Nor is it altogether to be despised that the Syriac version, of all the most ancient, says, that *Lydia* and the children of her house, and the Jailer and the children of his house, were baptized.

NEOPHYTUS. That might be an Hebraism; but though I don't speak as one that hesitates upon the point, yet I should be glad briefly to hear some of those reasons upon which the primitive saints baptized their little children.

SYLLOGISTICUS. The reasons are many, strong and conclusive: that I may not interrupt the story, I shall now mention but one of them: *Interest, in the promise of the covenant of grace, gives a right to baptism; the children of the godly are interested in that promise.* When any poor sinners were converted from Judaism, or heathenism, to christianity, the voice of Christ to

* Acts xvi. 15.

† Acts xvi. 33.

‡ 1 Cor. 1. 16.

them was, *Be baptized every one of you,—for the promise is unto you and your children**. The promise gives a right to baptism; the children of all the called have a right to the promise. This argument alone is able to sustain the cause for ever! 'Tis strong and plain in the words.

NEOPHYTUS. I must indeed own with the apostle, that Christ came to confirm the promises made to the fathers; and that this argument is sufficient to support infant baptism among the godly; but seeing all Christ's people are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to that great promise made to him; wherefore is it that any of the godly scruple the practice we speak of?

SYLLOGISTICUS. There is but one thing that makes them do so; that's unbelief. If we could but overcome that unbelief for them, we should hear no more of that controversy.

NEOPHYTUS. But I think our beloved EPHENETUS gave us the story under a strong intimation that they were baptized straightway in the room, which must be by application of water to them, or sprinkling it upon them.

PHILAL. Aye, to be sure, there was no other way of baptizing in those days: Paul, who, in a sore condition of body and mind, did neither eat nor drink for three days; upon his receiving the gospel, was immediately baptized in the house of Judas at Damascus; and then he received meat, and was strengthened†. And Paul himself after then, when the newly converted Jailer had kindly washed his stripes, the same hour of the night baptized the Jailer and all his straightway‡.

NEOPHYTUS. But some of us are very sensible of abundance of noise made about some modes of expression, such as in Jordan, into the water, out of the water, buried in baptism, and John baptizing in Enon because there was much water there.

* Acts ii. 38, 39.

† Acts ix. 9. 19.

Acts xvi. 33.

PHILAL. And all meaning no more than *at* Jordan, *to* the water, *from* the water, with and in Christ in the baptism of his sufferings, and John choosing to preach in a country where the multitudes and their beasts might be refreshed.

NEOPHYTUS. But there was one string that is often struck, and some have had their ears filled with the disagreeable din and noise of it, that *Baptizo* signifies nothing but dipping or plunging.

PHILOLOGUS. It has been made very plain, that there are *many* places in the New Testament where we are under an absolute necessity to understand *pouring* or *sprinkling* by it; and that there is *never* a place in the scripture where it does necessarily signify plunging or dipping*.

NEOPHYTUS. It is somewhat grieving there are so many of the godly, who, as to the subjects of baptism, will not believe what is written, and as to the mode, will spend so much unbecoming zeal for what is not found in the Bible. But I desire farther EPENETUS to excuse me, I am very well satisfied†.

* Mark vii. 4. 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. Hebrews ix. 10.

† For my own part, should any ask me why, as a christian minister, I baptize an infant? I can truly answer that I have the very *same reason* for doing it that John the baptist had for baptizing *penitent* sinners, in *Jordan* and *Enon*;—the *same reason* that *Jesus*, by the ministry of his disciples, had, for baptizing a still greater multitude;—and finally, the *same reason* that our baptist brethren have, or *ought* to have, and which they *profess* to have in the general tenor of their *practice*, for baptizing adults.—But this is not a place to enter into particulars.—At present,—without derogating from the due force of those arguments commonly adduced,—I shall content myself with the following remarks.

1. **WHATEVER** there may be in the ordinance of baptism of a *positive* consideration, there is nothing relative to the *subjects* of it so *merely positive* as to be independent on all *moral* grounds;—nay further, whatever relates to the qualifications of the subjects, is of a nature *entirely* moral,—and to say otherwise must imply a *contradiction*. Baptism, therefore, is an ordinance of a *mixed nature*, partly positive and partly moral.

2. As far as this, or any such ordinance, partakes of a *moral* nature,

EPENETUS. Sir, you are very welcome at any time, to throw into the way what you think convenient; but, perhaps, in the course of our story, things of this nature may fall into a more proper place, when and where you may demand what you please; but I told you that *Ffyddlon* was to preach, which he did the following day, at the hour appointed, to a crowded auditory; his text was, Isa. lvi. 8, *The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him.* And in the afternoon, (for he preached twice that day,) John vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* And God did greatly own the word of his grace; the converted were in a manner on the mount all day long, and many more were turned to the Lord. And the christians that came with *Ffyddlon* were made so glad with God's work, that they cried out, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from this place! The next day *Ffyddlon* preached from Hagai ii. 4. *Be strong and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord;* where he put

the *reason* and design of the law, or if you please the *spirit* of it, is our rule of duty;—And *only* so far as it partakes of a *positive* nature is the *letter* of the law our rule.

3. As what relates to the *qualifications* of the subjects is of *moral* consideration, we are necessitated to seek in them the *reason* and *intention* of the command;—but infants, partaking of the great *primary* qualification, which the *evident design* of the ordinance requires, ought to be baptized; and it must imply breach of duty in a minister to decline it.

To argue on this principle—"Baptism is a positive right and therefore OUGHT to be express, full and circumstantial"—is, on the principles, concessions and practice of Antipædobaptists, demonstrably *fallacious*. For, the law of baptism is evidently, in *fact*, not circumstantial and determinate, and therefore is not, cannot be an institution *entirely* positive. See Mr. Booth's *Pædobaptism examined*, (p. 11. *et passim*) a work lately published, which discovers a considerable degree of *good temper*, ingenuity, labour and erudition; but, if I mistake not, a great part, if not the whole fabrick of which rests on the above *indefensible* hypothesis. W.

them upon and directed them into church-fellowship; whereupon, after he had done, the people desired more particular instructions.

CHRISTOPH. I greatly desire to know what those instructions were, and how they were followed.

EPENETUS. Having observed to them how God was worshipped by the Patriarchs, and afterwards by the church of Israel, under the Mosaic institutions; he told them how, upon the change of the priesthood, there was of necessity also a change of the law*; explained that positive law of the Redeemer to them, which regards his church, its matter, his form and order, and desired them to fix upon all they judged really godly, as fit materials for the spiritual building.

NEOPHYTUS. This very entrance seems to be a very hard task, and nothing but absolute necessity should put them upon it; how could they judge who was really godly?

THEOPH. That this was absolutely necessary, how difficult soever it seems to be, appears many ways: the church is built upon Christ, the Rock of ages, and pray who is built upon him who is not really godly? He is a living Stone, and they who are built upon him must be lively stones. There must be spiritual communion and fellowship; but what fellowship can light have with darkness? Christ with Belial? or the temple of God with idols†? There must be a worshipping God in spirit and in truth, and what can those who are not really godly do at it? But in their search after real godliness, they must desire the eternal God to direct them, and faithfully do what they can.

CHRISTOPH. Want of faithfulness and care this way, has brought desolation and ruin upon many churches: a little leaven will leaven the whole lump;

* Hebrews vii. 12.

† 2 Cor. vi. 14, 18.

and a root of bitterness springing up will defile many*. When Saul, afterwards Paul, assayed to join himself to the disciples, they were afraid he was not a disciple, nor did they receive him, till they received satisfaction that he was a converted person†. A church of Christ, according to the account we have of it in scripture, is a society of persons, justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God‡.

NEOPHYTUS. Though I am but young, yet to my grief I have seen several who were members of churches whose conversation discovered very little of real godliness, if any: and certainly ungodly people, by many things they could observe in them, must think them the very same with themselves, notwithstanding the claim they might lay to religion.

THEOPH. Such persons either put on a form of religion, and a shew of zeal at first, so crept in unawares, and deceived the church, for no church upon earth is infallible; or else have been prevailed upon by their own corruptions, and Satan's temptations, and so as poor backsliders, are led into captivity by the law of sin: but be it the one or the other, a church of Christ walking according to rule, will not suffer such to stand long in church relation, to the dishonour of Zion's King, and the hurt of his sincere subjects.

NEOPHYTUS. No doubt but a walk, wherein by immoral acts, ungodliness discovers itself, is dishonourable and dangerous; but discoursing the other day with one, he told me it was a wrong thing to insist so upon the new-birth, and faith, and real godliness, for thereby a wrong step, in persons pretending thereto, becomes more remarkable, and draws a heavier censure; and therefore he thought that moral honesty and quietness, was enough to be required of or pretended to, by any church members,

* Heb. xii. 15.

† Acts ix.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

CHRISTOPH. But when you see him next, pray ask him what part hath a true believer in Christ, with a moral quiet infidel? Can they be said to be equally yoked? Are they suited to mourn together under a sense of the pollution of their natures, and the sinfulness of sin; to rejoice together in the dear Redeemer; and earnestly pray together for the light of God's countenance, and the refreshments of his presence? One says in his heart, It is good for me to draw near to God, his face will I seek; the other says, in his heart, to God, Depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways: are they fit for the most intimate communion and fellowship; can they strengthen the hands of each other in God?

NEOPHYTUS. But it was said that *Ffyddlon* desired them to fix upon whom they judged really godly; was not he more capable of judging? Then why did he not judge for them?

EPENETUS. So they would have had him do: but he told them it was their proper business to satisfy themselves with regard to each other's faith, experience, and conversation; that he was not to be a church-member with them; they were to walk in fellowship and communion, and that a relation of, and an inquiry into each other's acquaintance, with the grace of God would lay a lasting foundation for the most intimate fellowship under Christ's yoke.

THEOPH. There are some in the world that take no care of this, but leave all with the preacher, which he is pleased to take upon him; and when we consider the corruption of nature, inclining some to indolence, and others to ambition, this is not strange. But christian churches are for christian communion; which, without acquaintance with each other's faith in Christ, and experience of the grace of God, can never be maintained. But pray what further instruction did *Ffyddlon* give them?

EPENETUS. They being well satisfied in each other's

godliness, and filial inclinations to follow the Lord in all his pure institutions, he advised them to fix a day of fasting and prayer, that after seeking of God in the most solemn manner, they might, according to the will of God, publicly resign up themselves and theirs unto their dear Redeemer in a church state: and he put them upon and assisted them in some things preparatory thereunto.

CHRISTOPH. Pray what things were they?

EPENETUS. A confession of faith, and a church covenant.

NEOPHYTUS. Now do I want to hear them both.

EPENETUS. You shall have the sum and substance of them presently. The fixed day came, and all the godly were there betimes; they looked upon it as the greatest day of their lives, the day of their public espousals. *Yefan* begun, and the rest in order followed, in public acknowledgements of their original sin and guilt, and all their sins in heathenism, and their sinful resolutions to the last to oppose the Messiah of God, and his precious gospel, which many of them had heard of, and derided; they mourned, they wept, they loathed themselves in their own sight, and admired the patience of God towards them under so many provocations.

NEOPHYTUS. This was looking to him whom they had pierced, and mourning for him, as one mourneth for an only son.

EPENETUS. So it was indeed; but after some time, they, in the tenderest manner, owned the wondrous of grace, in sending some of them forth to the gospel, sending the gospel home to others, and making the word effectual to them all, for their conversion from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; and in this they were very particular, large, and affecting.

NEOPHYTUS. Thus they declared his mighty acts, and uttered the memory of his great goodness!

EPENETUS. Yes, and after some time, they sung of his righteousness: put on the Lord Jesus Christ, appeared in the holy profession of their completeness in the wedding garment; the best robe wherein now they beautifully appeared, with tears of joy flowing. And old *Didwyll* spoke out aloud, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

NEOPHYTUS. Thus Jehovah was their strength and their song, being become their salvation.

EPENETUS. True; and in the next place they owned before him the great design of the day, and blessed God that ever they were born to see it, that they were all there present to make a public surrender of themselves to the Lord, and begged he would receive them graciously, and in his strength they would render to him the calves of their lips.

It was agreed that *Yefan* should go before them in the work of the day; and now he stands up and reads the confession of faith with an audible voice, which contained the principal heads of divinity; the one eternal God in three persons, the Mediator God-man two distinct natures in one person, the creation, providence, the fall of man, the covenant of grace, the satisfaction of Christ, election, adoption, justification by imputed righteousness, the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in conversion, sanctification and comfort, the holiness of God's law, the nature and necessity of obedience thereunto, divine instituted worship, perseverance, and glory; much to the same purpose in the things mentioned, and others, with what we call the *assemblies* and the *Savoy* confessions.

NEOPHYTUS. Then the doctrine we call Calvinism, is, I see, a great deal older than Calvin.

EPENETUS. Aye, to be sure; for he took it out of

the Bible, and so did these; but *Yefan* having read it distinctly through, said to the people, If thus you believe with the heart, and if thus you are ready at all times to confess with the mouth, stand up and signify it by lifting up the hand; which they all did.

Then *Yefan* read the covenant, the people all sitting, and told them that this was the holy engagement they were now going to enter into before the Lord, and having read it *to* them, he said he would now read and pronounce it *for* them and himself, and desired they would all stand up all the while with their right-hands lifted up towards heaven; and at the conclusion they all said Amen; and *Yefan*, the company being sat down, said, But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end: *the house of God, the church of the living God; no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth upon an holy temple in the Lord, in whom we also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

They sung the 12th chapter of Isaiah, and *Yefan* concluded in prayer. Upon this *Ffyddlon* says, Brethren, the church of Christ, to which I am pastor, knew nothing of this great work of God when I came from home, else we should have been sent as messengers to behold your faith and order; and approving of both, should have given you in the name of the church sending us, the right-hand of fellowship; but blessed be the God of all grace, this is above and beyond our expectation; but as far as in us lies, as christians, we own you a precious church of Jesus Christ. Then *Yefan* desired him to give them a word of exhortation; which with great affection he did, and the meeting concluded with prayer and praise.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, great was such a day's work; but I humbly beg you would oblige me with at least an abstract of the covenant.

EPENETUS. It ran thus: "We poor sinners having destroyed ourselves by sin, yet being brought through grace and everlasting love to look unto him, on whom our help is laid, under a sense of our exceeding sinfulness, mourn and repent before the Lord: and, do here openly, and without reserve, resign ourselves and ours up wholly to Christ, the complete Saviour of Sinners, in church-fellowship and communion, resolving and promising in his strength, to believe his promises, live by faith on him, in whom they are all yea and amen, obey his precepts, hearken to the voice of his providence, serve him, and each other, according to all the laws, statutes, and ordinances of his house, taking the written word for our rule, aiming in all at the glory of Christ, our Priest, Prophet, and King, each other's edification, in the tenderest christian love, the increase of Christ's kingdom, and the good of all mankind, under the special direction and assistance of the spirit of the Lord."

Thus you have a plain account of the first church at Caerludd, matter and form. First they were converted by grace, and so fitted for a spiritual house; and then under this holy engagement they associated together, and became *formally* a church of Christ.

THEOPH. Our beloved EPENETUS, we are very much obliged to you for what you have gone through, which I hope has not been without pleasure to yourself, as well as to us; but I humbly apprehend you have a considerable work still before you. Here is a church indeed, and a precious one, built upon the true foundation, but not yet organized, there is never an officer in it: now I hope you will please to give us some account of their choosing and ordaining their elders.

NEOPHYTUS. But with submission I ask leave to be informed further, before that's entered upon, con-

cerning the covenant and agreement we have heard, which appears to me to be a case of weight, seeing it is the *formal* reason of a church: pray is it then absolutely necessary to the being of a church?

SYLLOGISTICUS. To be sure 'tis: for how *can two walk together except they be agreed**? When persons' faces are turned Zion-ward, then they shall say, *Come let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten†*. Members of churches stand in a special visible relation to each other, and this relation is voluntary, and therefore by agreement persons are received, and persons are rejected; but without this covenant both would be equally impossible. In a church, persons are to be watched over, admonished, called upon not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, unto the laws and statutes of Christ that relates to church members, they are to submit, and if unto transgression they add obstinacy and impenitence, then the church is bound to put such away from among themselves; and if such things, and others of a like kind, do not necessarily include and require a covenant and agreement, then words and things can never be understood.

NEOPHYTUS. But is it necessary the covenant should be in the very words EPHENETUS gave us?

SYLLOG. No: other words may be used; and the covenant may be comprehended in fewer words, or many more may be added, as may be thought most agreeable; but all according to the tenor of the gospel.

NEOPHYTUS. Excuse me: Is it necessary it should be a written covenant?

SYLLOG. Not absolutely necessary, though very convenient. A church cannot be formed without a covenant and agreement. and I humbly conceive the more explicit the better.

NEOPHYTUS. Pray what do you think of the

* Amos iii. 3.

† Jeremiah i. 5.

universal visible church that some people talk much of?

SYLLOG. A *chimære*, a *chaos*, without form, and void, and darkness upon the face of it.

NEOPHYTUS. But there are two or three scriptures that by the word church in the singular, seem to mean churches.

SYLLOG. I grant it; but perhaps upon strict examination it will be found they mean only the church at Jerusalem, which was a congregational one, though very large, and which, for ought I know, may be considered before we have done.

NEOPHYTUS. But in the covenant it was said, they gave up themselves and theirs, whereby must be meant their children, wholly to Christ: are the children of church-members related to the church their parents belong to, as members thereof?

SYLLOG. Without doubt: it was so in the church of the Jews, they and their children were branches in the olive tree; they for the present are cut off, and we are grafted in as they were, and the very same promises made to the fathers concerning their seed, are confirmed to us; and it is expressly said concerning New Testament churches, that their children should be as aforetime.

NEOPHYTUS. Indeed this seems to stand very fair; I never read of any of God's covenants with, or promises to, his church and people in my life, but their children were included and intended also. But what church privileges are the children of the church entitled to? The children of the Jews could all partake of the passover when they were judged fit for it.

SYLLOG. They are under the special inspection, watch, and care of the church, interested in the prayers thereof, should be called upon to every duty, and when they are judged fit, admitted to the Lord's supper.

NEOPHYTUS. And, pray are they upon obstinacy in sinful ways to pass under church censures?

SYLLOG. Doubtless: the very nature of the thing requires it; and in a due discharge of it they may expect the blessing.

NEOPHYTUS. But if the children are moral in their walk, and attend upon public worship, and the means of grace, yet backward to profess their faith in the salvation of Christ, what must the church do?

SYLLOG. Continue their good offices of prayer for them, love to them, and watch over them, and wait.

NEOPHYTUS. May all the churches flourish and shine in this and every other duty and privilege! But one thing more; here is a church and never an officer in it: is the church then in being before its officers?

SYLLOG. Yes, it is, and must be in being before them as officers; for they are to be choosen out of the church, and if Providence should remove them all by death, the church still may subsist, and proceed to choose new ones.

NEOPHYTUS. If in any of these inquiries I have been impertinent, I hope I shall be excused; and now I humbly desire father EPENETUS to proceed, and acquaint us what officers they choose, and how they ordained them?

EPENETUS. Being very sensible they stood in need of a pastor, they desired *Ffyddlon* would remove and come to them.

CHRISTOPH. Hey day! How early did *Caerludd* enter upon that work? and pray what answer did *Ffyddlon* give them?

EPENETUS. You shall have it in his own words.

Ffyddlon. My brethren, I hope the Lord will give you a pastor after his own heart, that will feed you with knowledge and understanding: but as for me, I stand in the relation of a pastor unto a church in the country. I was a member with them before I was

pastor to them ; they, after the solemn seeking of God, called me to the office and work ; and I, having in faith, and often in prayer, referred myself to the divine direction, was led to comply with their call. I solemnly gave up myself to the service of Christ among them ; I have been, and am blessed there ; I love them, they love me, and I often think I have more respect than is my due, and want for nothing that is needful. God called me to work there, I am well satisfied, and nothing but a thorough satisfaction that God calls me away shall ever remove me.

Yefan. Then, sir, pray be their bishop and ours.

Ffyddlon. That I cannot be. I cannot be a member of two churches, much less their pastor. I am called to feed that flock of God to which the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer ; *flocks* he never committed to any *ordinary* officer. It is a thing impracticable, impossible, and against the will of God.

Yefan. But Paul says that he had the care of all the churches.

Ffyddlon. And so had all the apostles and evangelists, they were all *extraordinary* officers ; the infant state of Christ's kingdom required it, and successors as apostles and evangelists they have none.

Yefan. Then pray, sir, what must we do ?

Ffyddlon. Among yourselves you must find the proper person or persons ; and that you may be directed aright, it will, in my judgment, be very expedient, if not necessary, you should keep a day of prayer as a church.

Yefan. You say person or persons, must there be more than one then ?

Ffyddlon. Among the ordinary officers, besides ruling elders and deacons, we read of pastors and teachers.

Yefan. I hope you will stay with us for some considerable time, and direct us in all this, for we know not how to go on.

Ffyddlon. That I cannot do, but will in a little time return to the church I belong to; and if they send me as a messenger, as I suppose upon your request they will, I shall, if the Lord will, come and assist you in all I can: in the mean time you would do well, I think, to meet as a church, pray, and after prayer, desire the church to nominate some person or persons that shall go before them on Lord's days in prayer and exhortation.

Accordingly they met, they prayed, they fixed upon *Yefan* and *Dewi* to go before them in God's worship on Lord's days, agreed to a letter to the church whereof *Ffyddlon* was pastor, desiring them to send their messengers up to their help and assistance, and to behold their order in choosing and setting apart, at such a time, proper officers for the carrying on of God's work in a regular manner in his house; and then humbly desired *Ffyddlon* to stay with them yet as long as he could, and if he pleased to administer the Lord's supper to them.

Says *Ffyddlon*, Stay with you some little time I will, and labour amongst you in the word and prayer; but I cannot regularly administer the Lord's supper to any church but to that whereof I am pastor.

Then said they, Can *Yefan* or *Dewi* administer it to us? He answered, They could not in their present capacity regularly do it.

He stayed among them for some time, strengthened their hands in God, laboured with success, and he saw many converted and added to the church daily; where they were received upon the confession of the christian faith, a relation of gospel experience, and the testimony of a holy conversation.

THEOPHILUS. How beautiful the order of *congregational* churches! It answers the pattern in the mount, the blessed rule in the written word; it is every way suited to promote edification, fixes a proper duty upon every member, encourages the greatest diligence, leads

to the greatest humility, and, of all the forms of church government and order pleaded for in the world, this alone is fitted to subsist and flourish under persecution, where all other forms must dwindle and vanish, and on these accounts and many more, this discovers itself to be *alone* of divine institution.

CHRISTOPH. Blessed be God for any acquaintance with it, and a heart to embrace it; but now I want to see this church organized, the choice, ordination, and work of the officers related, together with circumstances thereunto belonging.

EPENETUS. I hope at time convenient to gratify my dear neighbours therewith, but at present time fails us, and other duties call us. May all true instruction, consolation, and usefulness attend you all.

CHRISTOPH. And may you, and we together with you, be blessed with heart-refreshing views of this beauty of the Lord upon all the churches, his work appearing to his servants, and his glory to their children.

THE END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE III.

Subscriptions to a Confession of Faith and Church Covenant. Whether Ministers may orderly administer the Lord's-Supper unto Churches to which they don't belong. Ffyddlon preparing for his Departure. Alfred left. Public thanks to Ffyddlon. He departs. Their Usefulness at an Inn; where the Landlord turns Apostate. Letter to Hyfrydle for Messengers. A more public Call to Officers, Pastors, Teachers, Ruling-Elders, and Deacons, what. Dewi and two persons nominated for Deacons, go to Hyfrydle. Return with the Messengers from thence. The Ordination of Officers.

THEOPHILUS.

OUR dear NEOPHYTUS is here, waiting; I doubt not but eagerness to hear the pleasing story of the ancient Britons, forming themselves into evangelical societies, for the service of their Redeemer, brought him hither so soon; and I am sorry we should make him stay for us, only I know he can improve his solitary hours to a very good purpose.

NEOPHYTUS. My dear neighbours, I am glad to see so many of you come: I must own I am eager to hear the story, and your profitable remarks upon it*;

* As Epenetus was not yet come, Neophytus proposed a question or two to the company present.

and am not willing to lose any part of it. My thoughts have been employed upon some things in our last conference, which with submission, seeing our beloved EPHENETUS is not yet come, I shall take the liberty to mention. I was thinking that since the Bible is allowed to be the only rule of faith and practice, and a very sufficient one, what need was there of a confession of faith and church covenant? Why might not their

I. SINCE the Bible is allowed to be the only rule of faith and practice, and a very sufficient one, what need was there of a confession of faith and a church covenant? It is replied, (1) The *apostolick* churches had something similar, called *The principles of the oracles of God*, and *The form of sound words*. (2) Persons may in *general* subscribe to the Bible, who at the same time do not believe its contents, as the *Sadducees* of old respecting the five books of *Moses*, with all ancient and modern *Hereticks*. (3) A collection of the first principles of the oracles of God, is of *great use*, that in their light, as truths of the greatest importance, other things that offer themselves, may be tried. (4) This is no *imposition*, because *all* men have an equal right to collect from scripture what they apprehend principles of faith. (5) An *explicit* declaration of our principles is honest and generous. (6) Fundamental principles, collected into one consistent view, appear with stronger evidence, and make deeper impressions. A Constellation gives a greater light than dispersed stars. (7) The various *heresies* in the world make it necessary there should be confessions of faith, *that they which are approved may be made manifest*. See on this subject, Dr. WATTS's *Treatise on The Terms of Christian Communion*.—Quest. iv. viii. x.

II. WHETHER or not a christian pastor may regularly administer the Lord's Supper to any church but that more immediately under his care?

THE answer is given in the negative, but with what propriety let the reader judge from the following particulars adduced for proof. (1) To administer the Lord's supper is an act of office-power,—but a pastor is an officer no where except in his own church, by which Christ gave him that power. So the officers of one corporation cannot act as officers in another; nor one corporation choose officers for another. (2) It implies a claim to the chimerical and arrogant title of *universal* pastor.—But it is allowed he may *preach* elsewhere, as a servant of Christ, in season and out of season. So *Yefan* and *Dewi* preached, but could not regularly administer the Lord's supper, because not officially set apart.—Destitute churches may join a neighbour church for *occasional* communion, in virtue of the communion of churches;—so *Phæbe* of *Cenchrea* was recommended to the church at *Rome*.

declaring, or subscribing to the Bible, as the only and complete rule, be every way enough to the purpose?

THEOPH. Doubtless, in the very first churches there was a collection of what they called, *The principles of the oracles of God*, longer or shorter, as they thought convenient: some have thought that Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit*, was the only confession of faith they had; but what is produced out of Athanasius, Austin, and some others, for the proof of this will not support it. It is plain, they had a *form* of sound words, which related to faith and love, or things believed and practised; and Paul desires Timothy to hold fast that *form*; and whoever rejected it, though he pretended great esteem for the scriptures, was to be rejected himself.

PHILALETHES. Persons may, in general, subscribe to the Bible, who, at the same time, will not believe what is contained therein. The Sadducees would have subscribed to the five first books of Moses, but would not believe the doctrine of the resurrection, which our Lord proves to be there. The Arians, at this day, that they may, with the greater success ensnare and seduce, will own the Bible, when, at the same time, they deny Him who is the sum and substance of it. A collection of the first principles of the oracles of God, is of vast use to the godly, that they

It may be here remarked, that since all *true* churches have the same *divine head*,—are subject to the same *laws*,—and partakers of the same *privileges*,—they have mutually a just claim to *unfeigned love* from each other; and, as it is their *duty*, so it ought to be their *delight*, most cordially to promote the same *common* interest of *Christ* in the world, however they may differ in smaller matters, relative to officers or discipline.—“My dove, my *undefiled* (the *true* church) is but ONE.” (Cant. vi. 9.) The formation of christian churches, with their proper officers, existing in *separate* bodies, should be founded on the principles of *convenience* of situation, *better edification*, and the unalienable right of *private judgment*.

may at once behold what is certainly believed among them; and by, and in the light of so many truths, of the greatest weight, try any thing that offers; and in a ready subscription to, or a confession of such *prime principles*, the Bible is owned; and, whoever rejects them, let him distinguish, dispute, defend liberty, prate against creeds, spend himself against what he may please to call *imposition* never so much, should, by a church of Christ, be marked and avoided.

NEOPHYTUS. But have not *all* men liberty alike to collect from the scriptures, what they apprehend principles of faith?

PHILAL. Certainly they have; and the great outcry that some of us have often heard against creeds and imposition, has been itself, and still is, one of the *greatest* impositions upon mankind. Let them declare freely, without fraud, what they believe; let them collect and publish principles of their faith, the more plain and open the better; and though some of them may be suffered to wrest the scriptures, and form damnable heretical systems, and deny the Lord, that bought them, all this will but quicken the godly to search into the truth and defend it.

NEOPHYTUS. Upon thoughts I have had before now, and upon what you both have suggested, I do apprehend it very expedient, if not absolutely necessary, there should be systems of divinity, declarations and confessions of faith among the godly. Fundamental principles, collected in one consistent light, appear with stronger evidence, and make a deeper impression; a constellation gives a greater light than scattered, dispersed stars; and, I hope, I am thankful I have been instructed by my godly parents and friends, in, and according to a form of sound words, which, I trust, I shall be helped to hold fast: and I have thought it somewhat remarkable, that our late new opinionists, with all their refined reason, *can* give the world, *dare* give the world, no common confession of their infidelity.

SYLLOGISTICUS. How greatly does the wisdom of our God appear in all that concerns this! The various heresies in the world, make it necessary there should be a common confession of faith, that they which are approved may be made manifest; and the scriptures are sufficiently stored with materials for such a confession, and it is in wise grace, God has ordered it, that his people should, with prayer and diligent search, make the collection. As new heresies or errors arise, let the godly have a recourse to the law and to the testimony, for principles of truth to oppose them; there they may be *thoroughly furnished*. A confession of faith may be longer, or shorter, as the case requires, but always derived from divine revelation in the scriptures; consistent every way with the truth, and itself; and therefore no wonder, **NEOPHYTUS**, with that a great many who agree to oppose the truth, can never agree what to set up in the room of it.

NEOPHYTUS. My dear friends and neighbours, I return you thanks, and own myself, though weak and unworthy, ready to confess with the mouth, and subscribe with my hand, to the Lord, whenever called; but your kindness encourages my freedom: I remember that *Ffyddlon* said, that he could not administer the Lord's supper to the church at *Caerludd*, because he was not pastor of it; I should be glad to understand that matter a little better; for I see, there are godly and learned ministers, that do break bread to more congregations than one.

THEOPH. When we say a pastor *cannot* minister the Lord's supper to any church but to that more immediately under his care, we mean, he cannot *regularly* and orderly do it. To minister the Lord's supper is an act of office-power; a pastor is an officer no where but in his own church. The officers of one corporation cannot act as officers in another; nor is it in the power of one corporation to choose officers for another; One church cannot ordain officers for ano-

ther; and though some ministers take the *liberty* to break bread to other churches, than what they seem to belong to, yet be well assured, it is a liberty they *take*, which Christ never *gave*: and though, perhaps, they don't care to tell you so much, yet they fancy themselves *universal* pastors, and derive that chimerical power not from any church in the world, nor from Christ by any church, but from one another by uninterrupted succession: so when once they are ordained, though they remove to twenty different congregations, they are ordained no more.

NEOPHYTUS. More and more amazed! I thought there had been but one who pretended to be universal bishop; and now I fancy I can find a thousand. I could not have thought all this was in it.

THEOPH. Nor are they willing people should very particularly consider this; and, therefore, rather than bishop, or pastor, they choose to say minister; and with a manly courage and countenance, will demand whether a minister is not a minister when he goes abroad, or rides out, as well as when he stays at home? Many hundreds there are who will return no other answer than, 'Yes, to be sure;' for he is the same man abroad as at home; not considering the ambiguity of the word minister; but every minister has not power from Christ to break bread to any particular church, but he who is pastor, or teaching-elder in that church, who is bound to feed that flock of God, to which, according to the word of the Holy Ghost, he is made overseer, pastor, or bishop. It is an act of office-power, which Christ by that church, gave him; nor can he exercise it in any other church, for one church never ordains officers for another; nor is he so much as a member any where else.

NEOPHYTUS. But how can he preach any where else?

THEOPH. As a minister or servant of Christ, blessed with gifts, and a capacity to preach the gospel, in

season and out of season, apt to teach at home and abroad.

NEOPHYTUS. But, bear with me, Why could not *Yefan* or *Dewi* minister the Lord's supper to the church, seeing they were members of it?

THEOPH. For the reason already mentioned, because they were not ordained, nor called to any office necessary thereunto; nor has Christ given the church any power to call a brother *pro tempore*, or occasionally, for that time, to minister the Lord's supper unto them.

NEOPHYTUS. Then what must a church do that is destitute of a pastor or teaching-elder; if they desire the Lord's supper never so, what, must they not have it?

THEOPH. No, not as a church; but many, or all the members may sit down *occasionally* with other churches in communion; and to make it easier to them, another church may appoint to meet as a church in their meeting-house.

NEOPHYTUS. But this is still puzzling: Suppose I am an occasional communicant, in what capacity must I consider him that ministers? My pastor he is not, and you have said that none but the proper pastor can break bread to any church; it is an act, you said, of office-power, and unto me he is no officer.

THEOPH. You must consider him as bishop to, and in his own church, to which, and in which, he now ministers the Lord's supper, and consider yourself as a member of a church in communion, now by their consent, partaking with them by virtue of the communion of churches. So Phœbe of Cenchrea was recommended to the church at Rome.

NEOPHYTUS. But why may not a pastor, by virtue of the communion of churches, break bread to other churches than that he belongs to?

THEOPH. The divine institutions forbid it. They are to fulfil the ministry they have received; but they

have received no such charge as that. They are to feed the flock they have took the oversight of. The angel of the church at Sardis, is not the angel of the church at Philadelphia: they are *set in* the church: nor can reason admit that one church should communicate officers and their office to another.

NEOPHYTUS. I hope I am thankful, that he, who determines the bounds of our habitations, has called me to sojourn at Potheina, and I thank you my dear and valuable neighbours, for your kind endeavours for my instruction; excuse my impertinencies, and suffer me still to be troublesome: but here's our beloved EPHENETUS, and our dear CHRISTOPHILUS, just at hand.

THEOPH. Welcome, welcome, both of you we thought you long; but EPHENETUS may with the greater cheerfulness proceed in his story, its agreeableness to us discovering itself thus in our early attendance.— We have seen the first christian church gathered and formed at *Caerludd*, unorganized, and *Ffyddlon* and his companions ready to depart: now we hope we shall, in the course of this story, see this church furnished and adorned with proper officers, and useful gifts; and the beauty of the Lord their God upon them.

EPHENETUS. My dear friends and brethren, I must then acquaint you, that *Ffyddlon*, having with much success, acceptance, and comfort laboured among them, fixed the day of his departure, and desired them to grant him one request, which was to meet the day afore, that he might worship Christ with them once more, and take his leave of them. They complied, they met, he, in a very spiritual and affectionate manner, prayed with them, and for them; then took for his text, Matt. xvi, 18. *Upon this Rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.* He proved to them that Christ the Son of the living God, was the Rock, that the church

was his, that he was the builder of it, that the power and policy of hell should oppose it, but should never prevail against it. Upon all these he insisted, and was large in instruction and exhortation, and concluded in prayer and praise; and all the while the most tender passions discovered themselves in the whole assembly: the thoughts of parting with him, went very near them. When he had done, *Buddiol*, the godly landlord, prayed with an enlarged heart, and many tears; and after him *Tosturiol* prayed in a very evangelical spirit; and both went over many of the particulars of what they had seen from the beginning, and what they had seen there, admiring the riches of wise grace in the whole, so that all were swallowed up in the joys of heaven, and glory appeared upon all their tears.

CHRISTOPH. You make me wish I had been one of them! Oh! there is a real glory upon christianity, nor is there any comfort, of the same kind, with that which is enjoyed under the precious gales of the eternal Spirit. May all the dust of time be removed, and, formality and froth for ever banished, and the primitive simplicity, and glory of the christian religion, restored and established! But, poor hearts, they had their trials too; and my heart, at this distance, seems to sink for them; they must part with *Ffyddlon*, and his friends.

EPENETUS. True; but, they had this to comfort them; he could not say as Paul did, *You shall see my face no more*; and, besides, they got *Alfred*, with the consent of his master, *Buddiol*, to stay, and fix among them. He was a godly young man, was of great use among young ones, understood singing well, instructed others, assisted and went before the congregation in singing Psalms to the glory and praise of their Redeemer.

But, I was going to tell you, only you were pleased to put in your useful observation, that they both

having prayed, *Didwyll*, *Yefan's* father-in-law, stood up and spoke to *Ffyddlon* and his friends, as follows:

“ Our very dear and much honored brethren and friends,—I am ordered by this church of Christ, to return you thanks for your kind useful visit. We can never be thankful enough to our dear Redeemer, who sent you hither. Your labours amongst us, your prayers with us, and for us, the manifold instructions you have laid before us, and the repeated exhortations you have given us, in the dearest and tenderest love to us, we hope we shall never forget. You have been gentle among us, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; in you we have seen the kindness of God. Grief, at parting, is what becomes us; but, gladness of heart, in views of an eternal abode together with Christ above, should, at the same time, fill us. We are humbly thankful to the Lord, that you have the tidings to carry home, that there is a church of Christ at *Caerbudd*; a number of poor creatures, who were in the depth of heathenism, not many months ago, now brought to embrace the Redeemer, and submit to his yoke; and we testify, that we find it easy. We own your kind assistance, in teaching us how, according to Christ's institution, to take this yoke upon us, and become a visible church of his; and, we hope, we shall be helped further to follow your instructions, in the choice and ordination of a pastor, a teacher, ruling elders, with other helps, necessary to our edification, establishment, and comfort. We beg the continuance of your prayers and advice; and hope we shall, at the time appointed for so solemn a work, see, and receive you, as messengers from the church of Christ you belong to. May the eternal God continually have you under his protection, and bless you with his communion, and the comforts thereof; and may all prosperity attend the interest of our Redeemer.”

Then was sung the 67th Psalm, and the church for that time dismissed.

All the church was in tears at the thoughts of parting, for they all looked upon *Ffyddlon* as their bishop, and now looked upon themselves as sheep, without a shepherd; but he spoke comfortably to them all, under all the tokens of tenderness and love, and prayed them to look up to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. They took their leave of him, and, yet they could not take their leave of him; they would go and come again, and still do the same; and those, who took their leave of him over night, were there again in the morning: they every way acted like people as were willing never to part; but, part they must, and, at parting, the most tender tokens of love abounded on both sides, to the astonishment of many heathen beholders.

THEOPH. Our Lord did inform his people, that, by their love one to another, the world should know them to be his disciples. There is something in christian love, that is of a singular nature: he that dwells in it, dwells in God, and God dwells in him. It hath every thing desirable belonging to it, and lasteth for ever; whatever is against God, is against that: and whatever is against that, is against God: as inseparable from faith, the distinguishing character of a christian. Our present glory, and where among professors it appears not, call that place *Ichabod*; but, where it shines, say, the Spirit of God and of glory resteth here. This love among those who professed christianity, was very useful in the primitive times; often were persons converted in beholding it: and, perhaps, such fruit might follow the fervent love of those christian Britons.

EPENETUS. And, perhaps, you may hear something of that. As I said, part they did; but pretty many citizens went with them to a certain inn, about fifteen miles out of town, whither they had sent orders

to prepare a dinner; and where they found every thing prepared to their liking; they choose a large room, and when some dishes were brought in, *Ffyddlon* in a very spiritual, affectionate manner, worshipped God, and blessed his name for what they had seen and heard at *Cuerrudd*, committed the dear christians there to the tender care of their Redeemer, the Lord Jesus; begged the blessing of heaven on the present food prepared, and that God would, by his spirit, guide and bless their conversation, while together; and, that they might be a blessing there, and wherever they went.

CHRISTOPH. Now my heart begins to beat; expecting to hear something done for God there.

EPENETUS. They being pretty many, most of the family were near, to offer their attendance and service; but they were amazed to observe their ways. Their conversation was serious, yet cheerful; a precious vein of powerful religion, running through the whole. They discoursed much of the tender providence of God, in the table prepared for them; and under holy elevations of soul, discoursed of the eternal provision God made for them in Christ; and the wonders of grace, in bringing such poor sinners, who had destroyed themselves, into acquaintance with the bread of life, that cometh down from heaven. Love and delight did sit in their countenances; their religious pleasure was great; and the attention of the family very singular; though they could not refuse, yet they thought much of the time, lost in going for what was necessary; at last, says the landlord, Gentlemen, forgive me! I never was so uncivil to any company in my house, in my life; nor did I see my family carry it as they do now: I don't know how to blame them, I am in the fault myself; we are all of us as if we were listeners and liers in wait; but, gentlemen, forgive us, I am confounded, I know not what I say! I know not what to do! Oh! my heart! Oh! Bread

of Life! and, with that, he and his family burst out into tears in abundance.

PHILAL. What a mercy was here! What a testimony the Lord bore to the word of his grace, as now in conversation, delivered by his servants, in their testimony for him. May all the inns in Britain be frequented by such guests, and by such only. Oh! it is cutting to hear landlords, with a sneer and a scoff, say, of some ranting, gaming, drinking companies, in their houses or gardens, Ha! these are some of our saints and believers, they are known, they belong to——; come, if they do so, I hope, we may, without offence, follow.—But, pray go on.

EPENETUS. When they had dined, *Efyddlon* returned thanks to the Lord for their refreshment; and for what they had seen of his work in that place; and desired the blessing of heaven upon them all, that sinners might be converted, believers in Christ edified, and the kingdom of the Redeemer, by all means, enlarged. They sat a while, had religious talk with the landlord, his wife, and servants; endeavoured to instruct them in some of the *main* principles of the christian religion; and they all, under many tears, gave vast attention; and the landlord's concern seemed to exceed all the rest.

After a while, they parted, some for the country, and some for *Caerludd*, and the great affection discovered in them all, fastened the conviction and concern in the hearts of the beholders; they never had seen such love in all their lives.

CHRISTOPH. Now do I want to know how it went with this family as to religion.

EPENETUS. The christians that were to return to *Caerludd*, stayed as long as they could, to cherish and encourage this new work, and one or two of them went to prayers, and before they departed, gave them all the best advice they could, and recommended them to God and the word of his grace: after then,

for some time, once or twice in a week, they would visit this family, to encourage the work, and see how it did thrive; and, to make my story short, after a few months, the landlord turned his back upon them, and would not see them; his wife 'twas hoped might have some good thing in her towards the Lord God of Israel; but being confined to him, and such a house, led a sort of a dejected life, all her time afterwards; yet not without some hope; the servants, when their time was out, removed to *Caerludd*, into christian families, and proved eminent christians all their days.

NEOPHYTUS. With submission, I want to follow the bishop, *Ffyddlon*, home to his church; for he had a letter to read, and there were messengers to be sent, pray how was all that?

EPENETUS. In a full church-meeting, *Ffyddlon* informed the congregation, that he had a letter to read to them, from a newly gathered church of Christ, in *Caerludd*, gave them a short account of their faith and order, which, with many tears of joy, they heard, and then he read as follows;

“The Church of Christ, sojourning at *Caerludd*, unto the Church of Christ, sojourning at *Hyfrydle*, and the adjacent villages, all Grace and Peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Dearly Beloved in our Lord,

IT is not long since we sate in the region and shadow of death, without any desire after the knowledge of God; strangers to the covenants of promise, and, without God in the world: but we have found him, whom we did not seek, and he is manifested unto us, though we asked not for him. May the heavens for ever be filled with praises to God, for this salvation! We call upon you, and all the people of God,

to be thankful to the Father of lights, on our behalf. Our first-fruits were met with, in your assemblies; and God has greatly spread the blessing. We are, oh, amazing mercy, that we can say it! we are a church of Christ; and we do, with the greatest freedom, profess, that he is our beloved, and, he is our friend. He is precious to us, and enables us to believe, that we are precious to him; it is our desire to follow him fully; proper officers, for his service, and our edification, we are not yet furnished with; but our ascended Lord, who giveth gifts unto men encourages us to hope, that we have those among ourselves, he designs for service; and we trust to him, that he will direct our choice: we have, with submission to the over-ruling providence of our Redeemer, fixed upon the 8th and 9th days of the 7th month, next ensuing, for the setting them apart, by solemn ordination, to their proper work. We earnestly beg your prayers for us, and that you would please to send your messengers to behold our order, and to strengthen our hands. Your honored pastor has been already very useful among us, and his return with other messenges at the time appointed will be very acceptable to,

Your Brethren in the best Bonds."

The church with vast attention, joy, and gladness heard this letter; and the question being put, whether they would send messengers to the church at *Caerludd* in answer to this request, if they would, to signify it by lifting up their hands; which was immediately and unanimously done. Then after considering and consulting several persons, it was thought proper that *Ffyddlon* the pastor, and *Cywir* a teacher in the church, who lived in a distant village, and *Buddiol* and *Tosturiol*, who had been there before, should be their messengers; and they were asked, whether they were willing to go upon that service if the church

would send them? They said they were: upon this it was put to the church, whether they appointed the mentioned persons, as their messengers to the church of Christ at *Caerludd*; if they did, to signify it as before, which they unanimously did; and one was called to pray that God would graciously bless the design.

Prayer being ended, an affectionate brother in the church stood up, and moved that a day of thanksgiving to the Lord might be appointed, for that he had in such mercy entered the great city of *Caerludd*, and fixed the Redeemer's throne there. The question put and agreed to; and with great solemnity and praise the day was observed.

THEOPH. You have kindly answered **NEOPHYTUS**'s desire. Now, I say, with submission, I want to follow the young christians home to *Caerludd*, and hear what steps they took; no doubt but *Ffyddlon* gave them the best advice he could before he left them; only as far as you please I would be informed of the particulars.

EPENETUS. While *Ffyddlon* was yet with them, he frequently desired they would call *Yefan* and *Dewi* to exercise the gifts they had; and the church did always comply with *Ffyddlon*'s advice; and *Yefan* and *Dewi* did always in great seriousness and humility comply with the call of the church. They used to read portions of scripture, give the sense, compare spiritual things with spiritual, and infer what appeared to them profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. *Ffyddlon* observed that, wherein each of them seemed to excel, and gave some intimations of it, that the church might take the greater notice, and, in any choice they might make, walk after the Lord.

THEOPH. Then I see they did not point out the men for Christ, run *before* him, and fix not only the persons, but also their work, as too many do; but they submitted to the choice of their Redeemer, and

walked *after* him. Brethren and friends, the beauty of the Lord our God was upon them! Oh! when will he please to give us pastors, as at the first; and teachers, as at the beginning!

EPENETUS. As I told you, they heard them occasionally, while *Ffyddlon* was yet with them, and now having heard them two Lord's days, besides several days in the week, the church as a church appointed a solemn day of fasting and prayer before the Lord, that he would guide their minds, and determine their choice, as most for his glory and their edification; accordingly they kept the day, they fasted prayed, they wept before the Lord: at last, *Didwyll*, who was chosen for that time to be the mouth of the church, said to *Yefan* and *Dewi*, You are both desired for a little time to withdraw; which they complied with; then *Didwyll* said, "Brethren, we are a church of Christ through grace, but have no bishops, only the Great Bishop of our souls in heaven. It is his will there should be overseers of the flock, under shepherds, that shall feed his sheep, that shall feed his lambs. He giveth gifts unto men, that some may be pastors, and some teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Many of us have thought that our brother *Dewi* is designed by our great Shepherd for our pastor, and our brother *Yefan*, for our teacher. Use all freedom, my dear brethren, and consider whether it is the will of our Lord Jesus, we should call them to take the mentioned honorable characters, work, and service?"

Each brother spoke his mind freely, and they all said they believed it was the will of Christ they should. The sisters also by their silence signified the same thing. For women were not suffered to speak in the church; but if any one thought she had something of importance to offer, she called a brother out, and prayed him to do it: thus it was from the beginning.

But here, as I said, they were all of a mind; and *Yefan* and *Dewi* being called in, *Didwyll* said unto the church, "Brethren, if you do give brother *Dewi* a call to be your pastor, and brother *Yefan* a call to be your teaching elder, signify it by lifting up your hands;" which they unanimously did. Then said *Didwyll*, Brother *Dewi* and *Yefan*, you see how the hearts of your brethren are determined, and you hear their call; I humbly hope you'll think it is the call of Christ by them; in his name, and theirs, I desire your answer. They both answered, that Christ was precious to them, that the church was unto them very dear; and that the service of Christ and the church was their delight; that they were willing, though weak, to draw under their Master's yoke until death, desired the prayers of the church for gifts, strength, and success from above; and that their separation unto office in the church might be according to due order; and that ruling elders and deacons might be nominated also, to assist them in the work and concerns of the Redeemer's kingdom. Upon this they were asked, who did they think proper persons for ruling elders and deacons? They answered, that if the church thought fit, they should greatly like the brethren *Didwyll* and *Diwyd* for ruling elders; and the brethren, *Dyfal*, *Llawen*, *Tirion*, and *Haelionys* for deacons. Without any more ado it was immediately put to the church, whether they approved of the mentioned brethren for the mentioned offices, and called them thereunto. It went unanimously in the affirmative; and the brethren being desired to give in their answer, said they submitted themselves to Christ and the church, hoped they should comply with what they should be separated to; and earnestly desired prayers that they might be fitted for their work and service. Upon this, part of the 68th Psalm was sung, and the meeting concluded in prayer*.

* This day of fasting and prayer was appointed not only to implore the

SYLLOGISTICUS. But there seems to be something preposterous in what they did: they fixed their ordination days, before they thus formally called the persons they designed for office.

EPENETUS. True, it does seem so: but when we consider that this was but a *repetition*, with greater solemnity and form, of what they had done while *Ffyddlon* was yet with them, then there is only an additional power put into, and beauty upon what they had before agreed to; and, besides, the ruling elders and deacons, were not in any sense called, nor publicly nominated till now. And it was thought expedient, they should, after solemn seeking of God, give all the persons they, at that time, designed for office, this more formal call, as *preparatory* to their ordination.

NEOPHYTUS. But, bear with one born to be troublesome; the story carries me into greater perplexity. The number of officers, their different denominations, and their distinct work and service, lead me seemingly into inextricable difficulties. Pray, before we come to their ordination, let me be favored with some instructing account of those distinct offices, and their respective and peculiar ends and designs.

SYLLOG. The officers of the church in general, are bishops and deacons*, and their work is prophecy and ministry†. The bishops are either those that teach and rule, or those that rule only. The first sort are distinguished into pastors and teachers; but, I pray, my friends, to speak of those in order.

divine blessing on the intended ordination, but for a more express and regular call of the Pastors and Teachers to their respective offices, or a repetition of what was done when *Ffyddlon* was with them; and for the nomination of other helping officers; whereby a greater solemnity and beauty attended their proceedings.

W.

* Phil. i. 1.

† Romans xii. 6, 7.

PHILOLOGUS. The name of a *pastor* or *shepherd*, is metaphorical, suited unto his work, and seems very comprehensive of all the duties required of such a servant of Christ; so that, whenever he thinks of his name, he may take a view of his great work, to *feed* the flock committed to his care. Of pastoral feeding there are two parts; that of instruction, and that of rule or discipline*: and for such a work as this, there must be a competent measure of gifts and abilities, compassion and love to the flock, a continual watchfulness over them, zeal for God, and holiness before him, the church, and the world.

PHILAL. It is, indeed, promised, that God would give unto his church, pastors, according to his own heart, which should feed them with knowledge and understanding†, and this they must do by giving themselves wholly unto the word and prayer‡, and labouring in the word and doctrine: and unto this, it is certain, that spiritual wisdom and understanding in the mysteries of the gospel, is required; and a real inward experience of the power of the truth, skill to divide the word of truth aright||, so as to give to each his proper portion in due season§; an acquaintance with the state of the flock, and tender compassions for the souls of men, must be looked upon as absolutely necessary.

THEOPH. By such qualifications as these are they fitted in a great measure, for their business *with* the flock, but there lies upon their hands great business at the throne of grace *for* the flock. They must be men of prayer, and constantly engaged in supplications for those more immediately under their care; that the word of grace may be attended with great success; the church may be daily edified in faith, love, and holiness; that they may be sustained and sup-

* 1 Peter v. 2.

† Jer. iii. 15.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 17.

|| 1 Tim. ii. 15.

§ Matt. xxiv. 45.

ported under the many and various temptations that may attend them; that the sick and wounded may be healed, and that they may be helped to persevere to the end; and for the due performance of such supplications before the Lord, special acquaintance with the various circumstances and spiritual wants of the flock, must be thought absolutely necessary.

PHILAL. And, I must observe, that it is the pastor's spiritual duty, not only to *preach* the truth, as I observed before, but also to *defend* it against all opposition. The pastors must contend earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints; they must take heed to themselves, and to their doctrine, and every way oppose whatever is erroneous, profane, or fabulous. And, because it is impossible men should guard and defend any truth they are ignorant of, it is necessary pastors should be men of a clear, sound, comprehensive knowledge of the entire doctrine of the gospel, filled with love thereunto, having an aversion to *novel* opinions, and bold conjectures, and, very expedient, they should be men of learning, and ability of mind, to discern and confute whatever opposes the truth, and to appear in the defence and confirmation of the gospel*.

THEOPH. True: and the administration of the Lord's supper is committed to them, and they are to consider all the necessary circumstances belonging thereto, as to time, place, frequency, and order; to keep severely unto the institution of Christ, and take care that holy things should be only to holy persons; and, being a church ordinance, observe that they administer it no where, but to, and in the church of Christ they belong to; and that, when they are come together into one place†.

NEOPHYTUS. But our dear THEOPHILUS does a

* Phil. i. 17.

† 1 Cor. xi. 20.

little surprize me, that he did not, along with the Lord's supper, also mention *baptism*, as another special part of the pastor's work.

SYLLOGISTICUS. You need not at all be surprised at that; for baptism is no *church ordinance*. The gospel is to be preached to the church, and the world; the Lord's supper to be administered only to a particular church; but baptism is not extended to all the world, nor yet confined to a particular church, but professors of the truth, can, according to all that we find recorded in the Bible, lay claim thereto, for themselves and their infant seed.

Though pastors baptize, they do it not as pastors. Paul said, he was not sent to baptize, but at most as teachers in common; *Go teach all nations, baptizing them*, so that whoever *teaches* may baptize; nor does it appear that Peter baptized Cornelius and others at his house, only he commanded them to be baptized; and it's most probable, the brethren that came with him from Joppa did it. Ananias, a certain disciple at Damascus, baptized Paul, not in a church, nor was he then received a church member, nor can any thing be produced from any part of the New Testament, that can make a church ordinance, and so the pastors, or bishop's *particular* work, as bishop of that particular church. Of all the persons that we read of, baptized by the apostles and evangelists, there were none of them baptized in a church, nor were they yet church members.

NEOPHYTUS. But the apostles and evangelists were extraordinary officers.

SYLLOG. True; but did they ever break bread, or administer the Lord's supper to any one in an open field, or to one or two in a private house? If what they did in baptizing so, belonged to them *as extraordinary*: why did they not take an extraordinary step, as to the Lord's supper? And, why did they not leave some *rules* to direct persons in the *ordinary* adminis-

tration of baptism, seeing *they* must not be followed? If what they did was not the rule in this for following ages, then are we left in perpetual darkness.

CHRISTOPH. Unto what has been mentioned concerning the pastor's work, I take leave to add that they are also to take all the care they can of the poor, visit the sick and afflicted, shew all manner of tenderness and love to any under distress of any kind; and also to have constant concern, and bear a principal part in the rule and government of the church, and it is certainly their business to have much at heart the conversion of poor souls to Christ; and especially the conversion of the *seed* of the church, who, according to all that is revealed, are in a peculiar manner, committed to their care.

NEOPHYTUS. Upon the account you have given of a pastor, and his work, there seems to be no room for any other officer but himself; all the work seems to be his, or such as he is capable of performing.

CHRISTOPH. And why could not you, my dear NEOPHYTUS, as well, or much better, have inferred that, seeing his work was so great, to be attended to with such diligence and labour; under so many different and various considerations, therefore, it was highly necessary, that he should have *helps* appointed for his comfort and encouragement, and for the edification of the church.

NEOPHYTUS. I grant your inference is more natural than mine; but take it as we can; how great a work must it be! Oh, pastors! pastors! their work is good, but very great. How does it call for prayer for them! and how does it demand all christian respect and pity! who is sufficient for such things.

CHRISTOPH. There is nothing like love to put persons upon acts of service. There is nothing but love to Christ, and love to poor sinners, that can put them upon this, so great a work. *Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep, feed my lambs:* what are the motives that hundreds have, to take the name

upon them, is not our business to consider; but whoever is not constrained to the office and work by the love of Christ, is a stranger to all that is really intended thereby.

NEOPHYTUS. But I am a greater stranger unto the other officer's name and thing; a *teacher* was mentioned, and pray what is he?

PHILOLOGUS. It has been asserted, by persons of very great learning and worth, that διδάσκαλος is no where used in the New Testament, but for a teacher with authority, and διδάσκειν does always signify to teach with authority and power, the peculiar work of those who are ordained, or set apart, publicly to teach others: but I humbly conceive, that the word is of a larger extent; and may intend also, all the endeavours of private christians, to promote each other's edification in knowledge, faith, and holiness; so Col. iii. 16. διδάσκοντες Καὶ νουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς, *teaching and admonishing one another*. And the good instructions, which women, in their proper place, may give unto others, either by word or example, are delivered to us in the New Testament, by this word, and they denominated thereupon Καλοὶ διδασκάλοι, *teachers of good things*, Tit. ii. 3. However, this does not hinder, but the word may chiefly intend a public teacher, and I freely grant it does so. The officer now to be considered, is ὁ διδάσκαλος *the teacher*, whose very office, proper work, and business, to which he is set apart, is to *teach*. To expound the scriptures, insist much on the great doctrines of the Bible, and open them; defend them against all erroneous opinions, particularly those apprehended most dangerous; catechise and instruct all under his care, teaching every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

PHILAL. It is certainly very plain in the New Testament, that Christ does not only set in his church, pastors, but teachers also*. In the church at Antioch,

* Eph. iv. 11,

there were prophets, that is pastors, and there were teachers also* ; so Christ hath set in his church, first apostles ; secondarily, prophets ; thirdly, teachers†.

NEOPHYTUS. But perhaps, it is nothing but another name for the same office, so that nothing is really intended thereby, but a pastor ; for a pastor certainly must be a teacher.

SYLLOGISTICUS. Where the apostles enumerate distinctly all the teaching officers of the church, he makes a difference between them. There is a difference between apostles and evangelists though both extraordinary ; so certainly there must be between pastors and teachers ; which are mentioned in the same place. For, observe ; the apostle doth not say, pastors *or* teachers, but pastors *and* teachers. Moreover this must contain either the addition of a new office, or it is an interpretation of the word that went before ; the latter it could not be, because the word *pastor* was as well known as that of a *teacher*. Nor are they synonymous terms, for though all pastors are teachers, yet all teachers are not pastors. No instance can be given of the same officer at the same time expressed under *various* names ; though we know that by pastors, bishops, or presbyters, the same officers may, in different places of scripture, be intended ; but though we do in the same place read of bishops and deacons, as distinct officers, we no where read of bishops and presbyters in the church ; and the reason is plain, because the office is one and the same ; from what is revealed, we are under a necessity to understand by pastor and teacher, two distinct officers set in the church.

THEOPH. And I will take leave to observe, that as they differ in name, so in their work, Rom. xii. 7, 8. Persons of different gifts and offices are to attend diligently to their proper work ; *He that teacheth on teaching, or he that exhorteth on exhortation.*

* Acts xiii. 1.

† 1 Cor. xii. 28.

NEOPHYTUS. But may be no office at all is denoted by the word *teacher*, only a general appellation that did belong to all those who taught others, whether statedly or occasionally. All who had ability might teach, and, it is very probable, did teach in those primitive churches; so they might all prophecy one by one, 1 Cor. xiv. 24. 25. and all who prophesied taught.

PHILAL. It is true, that in the first churches, every one as he had received the gift, did minister the same to others; they looked upon themselves as stewards of the manifold grace of God; and they knew a steward must be faithful; but still, though all had that freedom, and doubtless many made use of it; yet from thence they were not denominated teachers. For teachers are numbered among the officers Christ had *set* in the church; they were not the whole church, but they were set in it; and were appointed for the work of the ministry, and for the perfecting of the saints, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. Moreover teachers are mentioned as those, who, with other elders, did *preside* in the church, and join in the public ministration thereof, Acts xiii. 1, 2. And I must observe, that this truth appears in the strongest light, in that they are charged to attend to the *work of teaching*, Rom. xii. 7. which the brethren of the church in general are not bound to do; nor any but those whose office it is to teach.

NEOPHYTUS. Then I may humbly apprehend, it was only an office of *teaching*, to which some were set apart in the church; but with the *rule* of the church, and with the administration of the Lord's supper, they had no concern, otherwise than as private members.

THEOPH. Perhaps such officers as you speak of, have been chosen unto very good ends and purposes in the churches of Christ; and some have thought, that by him that teacheth in Gal. vi. 6. we are to understand

such an one. But the teacher in Eph. iv. 11. is of another kind; he is chose for all that belongs to the work of the ministry, all that tends to the perfecting of the saints, and the edification of the body of Christ; and therefore he is chose to *rule*, and administer the Lord's supper. Indeed, the name *teacher*, as such, does not necessarily extend to all this; but he who is chosen to be a teacher, may, at the same time, be chosen a *teaching elder*, and then he has all the power I mentioned, and which the text in Ephesians requires he should have.

NEOPHYTUS. Upon what you have all said, I humbly desire to be informed wherein pastor and teacher do differ.

PHILAL. *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are difference of administrations, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all; but the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal: for to one is given, by the Spirit, the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge, by the same Spirit. Our ascended Lord divides to every man severally, by his Spirit, as he will. Some excel in one gift, some in another, but no one man upon earth excels in them all; some with abundance of wisdom open, explain, and urge all our evangelical duties; and some with abundant knowledge, explain the great doctrines of faith; the churches of Christ in their choice should observe how their Lord goes before them, provides for them, and points out to them the persons and their gifts. That they choose for their pastor, him that abounds in preaching their duties to them evangelically; and for their teacher, him that opens the great doctrines of the gospel practically; and then expect each to work without confinement, according as they obtain help from God.*

NEOPHYTUS. I must own there appears a glory upon this, the edification of the churches seems to

be provided for wonderfully in this; and the comfort of the officers themselves: but why don't all the churches choose pastors and teachers, as it seems, indeed, evident from scripture, it was at the beginning.

THEOPH. It behoves the churches themselves to consider it.

NEOPHYTUS. But, suppose the church be but small, may not a pastor only, be thought sufficient?

THEOPH. As I said before, the church must consider that; but, according to what is revealed, concerning the provision Christ makes for the edification of the churches, a church is not completely organized without a *teaching elder*; though many churches make a shift without such an officer, and may be every way the *poorer* for it.

CHRISTOPH. But the glory of a christian congregation, worshipping their Redeemer, according to primitive simplicity and purity, attending to the joyful sound of him that exhorteth, and of him that teacheth, according to the analogy of faith, is very great. There the care and tenderness of Christ, as the Prince of shepherds, may, in a great measure, be seen in the love and labour of a faithful pastor; and his wisdom and pity, as a teacher, sent from God, in an encouraging manner to be observed, while the scriptures are expounded, and the great doctrines thereof explained by a wise and able teaching elder: they both feed the flock with milk, or with strong meat, as is requisite; and though the trials and discouragements, attending their proper work and duty may be many; yet of the greatest use they must be to each other in the Lord; but woe to him that is alone when he falleth, for he hath not another to help him up.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, may we live to see this primitive glory upon the churches of Christ! But *ruling elders* were also mentioned; pray favor me with some account of them.

THEOPH. We must then observe, that in a church of Christ there is *rule* and *government*. The Redeemer is not the author of confusion; he is a God of order. In a church of Christ, walking in the faith and order of the gospel, there are persons who rule and govern. We read of them that *rule* well; and of *governments*, where the abstract being used for the concrete, we must understand *governors*; for Christ has appointed but one kind of government in his church. He that *ruleth* is commanded to rule with diligence; and the rest are commanded to obey them who have the *rule* over them, and submit themselves.

CHRISTOPH. And, with subjection of soul and comfort, do I always consider Christ as Zion's King, Law-giver, and Judge. The government is upon his shoulders; and though there are in his church, those who are called rulers and governors; yet they are but his servants. Whatever power they have, it is but a *ministerial* one; if they despise or neglect the power he gives them, or omit the proper exercise thereof, they sin; and if they take a power he does not give, they usurp what is not their due, and such acts of theirs are not only null and void, but sinful.

PHILAL. And it is, I hope, with evangelical thankfulness of heart, I often think of the honor Christ puts upon a congregational church, in making it the seat of power and rule. A number of poor converted sinners have power to embody, and become a congregational church, as our beloved EPHNETUS told us they did at *Caerludd*; such a church has power to open its gates to receive members, and to shut out the unruly; such a church has power to call any of their number to a regular trial of their proper gifts, and approving of their gifts, has power to call and ordain them to the stated exercise of those gifts in a proper office; and then has power to call upon, and charge those officers, to see that they fulfil the ministry they have received.

NEOPHYTUS. Then why can't they do *all* themselves without officers?

PHILAL. Because Christ, the only King of the church, gave them no such power. There is rule and government, as was observed, in the church, it is Christ's, he makes the church the seat of it; and empowers the church to choose proper officers to execute it: but though they have power to organize themselves, they have no power to continue in an unorganized state; and though they have power to choose officers, they have no power to reject them at pleasure, without special cause; their power is altogether limited by the revealed will of their King, and so is the power of their officers.

THEOPH. Right; and therefore it must be observed, that the church is not the seat of *absolute* power and authority; nor is it the church that gives what power it pleases to this or the other officer, but it is Christ who empowers by the church. He has already revealed what officers there must be, and what is their proper power and authority, nothing must be added thereto, nor took therefrom; and the church after humble and earnest supplication, and serious consultation in his presence, is empowered to nominate and choose those officers, and then are obliged by the laws of their Lord and Redeemer, to submit themselves unto them.

CHRISTOPH. Then, those officers in executing their trust, don't execute the laws of the church, but the laws of Christ; nor are they to abate thereof, nor add thereto; though they are rulers, they are yet servants. It is the execution of the authority of Christ in the church, that is committed to the elders.

PHILOLOGUS. The apostles were elders, Peter says he was one, and John calls himself an elder, all the rest were such, and therefore rulers and governors in the churches of Christ; according to the mind of Christ, none but elders must rule in a church; that

character most directly points out their authority. They are some of them, on other accounts, called bishops, pastors, teachers, ministers, &c. but what belongs to them in point of rule, they have as elders, and not otherwise: Paul sent for the elders of the church, and said, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.* So under the Old Testament the rulers of the church were constantly called its elders.

NEOPHYTUS. I humbly desire to be informed what work it is that Christ the King requires from those elders, as they are called to rule; for to *rule* and to *obey* are words wherewith some persons are not willing to be very familiar, though, to be sure, as given to us in the gospel, nothing can be in them disagreeable to faith.

THEOPH. No to be sure; for those who are called to rule, are not in the least to lord it over God's heritage; for they are not lords over the faith of the people, but helpers of their joy; and the power they have, whatever it is, is not for destruction, but for edification; for, as rulers, they are to watch diligently over the ways, walk, and conversation of all the members of the church. To see that they behave blamelessly, and shine in a holy course of life, as lights in the world; giving a good example unto each other, and unto all others in a fruitful, useful, inoffensive walk: that they make a due representation of the holiness of Christ, and the purity of his commands. And upon any observation they make in this care of theirs over the flock to exhort, encourage, reprove, or admonish, as the case may require.

CHRISTOPH. And seeing there are many corruptions remaining, even in the most godly upon earth, and many occurrences and temptations that tend to oppose and overthrow the design of our dear Lord's great command, that his disciples should *dearly love* one another, and make themselves known to the

world thereby; it is certainly the work of those elders to watch against all appearances of differences and divisions among the people under their care. Love may be soon and insensibly cooled, but not so soon kindled. The usefulness of it is unspeakable, and when it departs from a people, all is gone along with it; and, unless almighty grace causes the return of it, there is nothing can make up the loss. Wherefore the rule of the church, in my poor judgment, doth principally consist in a strict observance of the law of love, in itself, and all that belongs to it, with the prevention of all that is contrary thereunto.

SYLLOGISTICUS. And, I think, I may say that all reason, as well as revelation, makes it the duty of those rulers to stir up all the members of the church to the special duties that may lie upon them severally, according to their different talents. The rich, the poor, the old, the young, those in peace, or those in trouble: to see that every relation be filled up with the proper duties thereof; and, that every spiritual gift be called unto, and put upon its proper exercise.

THEOPH. The being and order of a church may certainly be thought to depend very much upon the constant attendance of those belonging thereto, in the public assemblies. In all ages it has been the manner of some to *forsake* the assembling of themselves together, but always to the dishonor of Christ, and their great disadvantage. Churches have greatly suffered hereby; divisions and decays of love have sprung from remissness in attendance on the public worship of the church; therefore the rulers should watch diligently, lest such a root spring up, and many be defiled, and hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. First one may grow remiss, and then another; first to one degree, and then to another; until, as has been often observed, the whole *lump* be infected.

CHRISTOPH. But, what do you think of the sick

and afflicted! Is there any sick among you? let him send for the elders; and, if he did not send, it is their special duty to go: reason, as well as revelation, makes it so; they are bound by the law and light of nature, to shew mercy; but the special relation, by divine institution, they stand in, to the afflicted members of the church, lays them under an unavoidable obligation to *offer* all the service they are capable of: and many of the afflicted may, on several accounts, be exposed to more than ordinary trials in their sicknesses; which should be duly considered, and they pitied and assisted. *I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me.* Matt. xxvi. 36.

PHILAL. And therefore I must observe, that it belongs unto them, as elders, to advise with, and give direction unto the deacons of the church, as to what concerns the making provision for, and distribution to the relief and succour of the poor of the church; and, if the poor be multiplied amongst them, and they unable to support them, and Providence brings unto them assistance from other churches, that relief is to be deposited with the elders, and disposed of, with, and according unto their advice. *Then the disciples, every man, according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea; which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.* Acts xi. 29, 30.

THEOPH. And I shall add, that it is certainly their duty to prepare every thing that is to be brought into the church and proposed there; that nothing crude and undigested, which may give occasion to vain janglings, may be introduced; but every thing decently and in order; where they are to reason as becomes their character, and then act, with the consent of the church.

SYLLOGISTICUS. And now I will take the liberty to observe, that seeing what we have all said is far short of amounting to the whole of their work, and

seeing pastors and teachers are obliged to give themselves to the preaching of the word and prayer, who is the person that dare say, that a pastor alone is sufficient for all this work? Where is the church in the New Testament that had but one elder? The *angel* of the church at Ephesus we know must be a *collective* word; for Paul sent for the *elders* of that church and they came: and unto the angel of the church at Smyrna the Lord says, *Fear none of those things, thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison; ye shall have tribulation, be thou faithful.* There was never a church in those days with only one bishop; but elders were ordained in every church; Acts xiv. 23. and even where there is a pastor and a teaching elder in a church, who make it their business, as they should do, to know the state of the flock, and preach constantly to them, not any thing, so as it is but truth, but the present truths the flock stand in need of, all reason, NEOPHYTUS, if there was no revelation for it, makes it necessary they should be assisted in the ruling part by proper officers, who are not called to give themselves to the word and prayer*.

* That there is such an officer, by divine institution, as a *Ruling Elder*, whose proper work is only to rule, is argued from the following passages. (Not to insist on 1 Cor. xii. 28.—*Governments.*) 1 Rom. xii. 6—8.—*He that ruleth with DILIGENCE.* The *analytical* account that must be given of the place requires what is here pleaded for.—The *whole work* of church officers is to be understood thus:

All church-office-work is either

1 Prophecy	} i. e.	{ 1 Teaching 2 Exhortation.	} Which belong respectively to	{ Teaching Elders Pastors.
or				
2 Ministry		{ 1 Rule 2 Bounty.		{ Ruling Elders, Deacons.

2. 1 Tim. v. 17, *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour, ESPECIALLY those who labour in the word and doctrine.*

NEOPHYTUS. Indeed, according to the account I have heard of the work, I think so too; but I shall be very glad to hear it proved from scripture, that such an officer as a *ruling elder*, I mean one who is not obliged to preach, but to *rule* only, is of divine institution: I am pretty well convinced such an officer is needful.

PHILAL. Then depend upon it, Christ has appointed such officers; for whatever is needful, Christ has certainly favored his church and servants with: but you may please to attend to what is written, Rom. xii. 6, 7, 8. *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

Here are the different officers, and their different

—Here are two sorts of Elders, those whose *principal* business is to labour in the word and doctrine, and those whose *proper* concern is to *rule* well.—The *former* are to give themselves to the word and prayer,—reading, exhortation and doctrine,—“to meditate on these things, and give themselves wholly to them.” (1 Tim. iv. 13—15) The *latter* to rule well, and with diligence, though they labour not in the word and doctrine.—Will any object, “that these Elders were *Bishops*, in the *English* sense of the word, or persons of an order *superior* to common ministers,” and not engaged in ministerial labours? Be it so; the consequence is evident, *viz.* That *unpreaching Prelates* (to use *Latimer’s* expression) are worthy of *less* honour (*respect* and *maintainance*) than their faithful and laborious clergy. See *Doddridge* and *Calvin* in loco.

BUT, notwithstanding what has been said, and however *desirable* such *ruling Elders* may be in *large* congregations,—it must be allowed, that some Christian Societies are so small as to render them *less necessary*: Not to say that there are some churches so circumstanced as not to possess such valuable persons as would be likely to fill the Office in an honorable and useful manner; and to invest *others* with such power, would not answer the end proposed. W.

work, plainly mentioned and fairly distinguished; all of them ordinary officers; for even those who prophesied must prophesy according to the analogy of scripture; and if there was no place of scripture but this, by him that *ruleth*, I should understand a *ruling elder*, whose proper office and business is only to rule, and that with diligence.

SYLLOG. The analytical account that must be given of the place requires it; for, first and more generally, the whole church-office-work and power is divided into that of prophecy and ministry. Then the first is more particularly divided into that of teaching and that of exhortation; then the latter is divided into that of rule; he that ruleth; and into bounty and mercy the proper work of the deacons. A blessed plain enumeration of all church officers, that should stand in the church till Christ comes.

PHILOLOGUS. It is very plain there is, in one, rule required with diligence. His ruling must be an act of office, among those to whom he stands related, and over whom he is placed as an officer. And distinguished he must be from him that teacheth and from him that exhorteth; for the difference is made between them as plain as words can make it; and besides, *rule* is his principal work; for thereunto he must attend with diligence; whereas pastor and teacher must give themselves to the word and prayer with diligence; and labour therein as what requires their principal, their constant, and continual attendance. A plain proof this, whereunto the churches would do well to take heed.

PHILAL. And so is that in 1 Cor. xii. 28. *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.* No unprejudiced impartial person of any tolerable judgment will ever question, but by *helps* must be understood *deacons*; for that's the plain account we

have of them at their first institution, that they might help the apostles in some of the external concerns of the church; and by *governments* we must understand *ruling elders*, which the Holy Ghost thought fit also to call forth to assist in the rule and government of the kingdom of Christ.

SYLLOG. There is a necessity it should be so understood; for by *governments* we must understand *governors*, the abstract for the concrete; as before, *helps* for *helpers*; for Christ never appointed in his church but one form of government. And the pretence, that by *governments* are meant gifts for governments, is altogether vain and frivolous; for those gifts must be ordinary or extraordinary: if ordinary, why numbered and placed among extraordinary ones? if extraordinary, wherein did they differ from what was purely apostolical? the apostles being mentioned first. And moreover, if ordinary ones, they are to abide in the church, and so there are persons who have gifts for government, and consequently should be governors, who are not teachers, but distant from them. And this I take to be another plain scripture proof, that there are, or ought to be in the churches, ruling elders, as distinct from pastor and teacher.

PHILAL. And I can give you another, 1 Tim. v. 15. *Let the elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* This, one of the greatest men that ever England saw, observes, is of *uncontrolable evidence*, if it had any thing to conflict withal, but prejudices and interest. Any person who does not come with a resolution to reject, will, at first reading, see two sorts of elders here; elders whose *principal* business is to labour in the word and doctrine; and elders whose *proper* business is to rule, and whose duty it is to rule well. I must say of this text, that it makes what we assert as plain as the sun at noon-day, even when no clouds interpose. The endeavours of men to

raise a dust, can never so darken this text, but a mind void of prejudice will see what is asserted concerning ruling elders, held forth in it in the strongest light*.

SYLLOG. True; a preaching or teaching elder is bound to give himself to the word and prayer, to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine, yea, to give himself wholly thereunto; and, pray, if he, who is thus in duty bound, does not labour in the word and doctrine, what double honor, yea, what single honor can he lay claim to, though he minds the ruling part? It is plain, the text speaks of elders that rule well, and are thereupon worthy of double honor, and yet labour not in the word and doctrine: their double honor whereof they are worthy, supposes them in the discharge of all their proper duty. It's their duty to rule, but not to preach. The case is very plain; elders that rule well are worthy of double honor, though they labour not in the word and doctrine; preaching elders, if they labour not, are worthy of no honor. Or you may take it thus; preaching elders, let them rule never so well, if they labour not in the word, are not worthy of double honor; but there are elders who are worthy of double honor, and yet labour not in the word; therefore there are elders who are not obliged thereunto, but to rule only.

PHILOLOGUS. And therefore I must observe, that all the endeavours of men to cloud this testimony, should be called fighting against God. They don't

* Colligere autem hinc licet, duo fuisse tunc presbyterorum genera: quia non omnes ad docendum ordinabantur. Nam aperte verba sonant, quosdam bene et honeste præfuisse; quibus tamen non erant commissæ docendi partes. Et sane ex populo deligebantur graves et probati homines, qui una cum pastoribus communi consilio et autoritate Ecclesiæ disciplinam administrarent, ac assent quasi censores moribus corrigendis. Hunc morem *Ambrosius* obsolevisse conqueritur doctorum ignavia vel potius *Superbia*, dum soli volunt eminere.

The great, the learned, and the sincere Calvin on 1 Tim. v. 17.

like it should be as this text directs, and therefore the text delivered by divine inspiration must be opposed; and a downright denial of the whole text and its design, would be much more honest, than to kiss it and stab it; and because the adversaries of it can't agree among themselves, some torment it in one form, and some in another; and all aim at double honor thereby. *μαλιστα* they say, does not distinguish but describe, and is as much as to say, *seeing they also labour*; but it is never used in that sense in any place in the New Testament; nor does the context require it should be so took: but one sort of elders, they say, must be here understood, namely, the preachers or the ministers of the gospel; and I say then, that thus the text must run; Those who labour in the word and doctrine, that rule well, are worthy of double honor, especially if they labour in the word and doctrine: but, say they, the *word* signifies to labour with pains and diligence; and, I say, it is the duty of all to labour so, and who don't, deserve no honor; and besides, there is nothing extraordinary in it; but what belongs to all who are concerned in any service for Christ.

THEOPH. I am abundantly satisfied that there should be a presbytery, an eldership, a competent number of elders in every church. So we read that the apostles directed and assisted in the ordination of *elders in every church*, Acts xiv. 23. As was before observed, there was no such thing from the beginning, as churches with one elder a-piece; and I am well assured, that when the primitive glory is restored, the churches will have their elderships as at the beginning. Oh how beautiful must it be to see a godly pastor, and a sound able teaching elder, strengthening the hands of each other, labouring in the word and doctrine; assisted in the ruling part, which requires great diligence, by able and faithful ruling elders; constantly attending to their proper work: and if their temporal circumstances will not allow them to spend so much

of their time as the work seems to require, without assistance; then assistance is their due, if they rule well, even to a double honor; for *thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.*

CHRISTOPH. I think all who love the Lord Jesus Christ should earnestly pray for the return of that primitive simplicity and glory. Christ is greatly honored in the beautiful order of his house. Whenever human wisdom, not to say craft, has undertook to make any alterations, it has been always for the worse, and so far deformity has been introduced. Conformity unto Christ's own appointments, and that alone, is beautiful. How beautiful a sight is a church of Christ, met in his presence, with their elders among them, going before them with their own consent, in the great concerns of the kingdom of heaven; elders and people, having their eyes to their King in the midst of them, and doing all things in obedience to him! No sight so glorious upon earth! Upon the ruin of this antichrist grew; and this is what the mother of harlots, and all the harlots her daughters must abhor; but let the children of the kingdom breathe after the glory.

THEOPH. And while we are earnestly breathing after the return of such glory to the churches, may we be helped to bless God that we have churches of Christ, and godly pastors in them, that are honored with abilities and service: and seeing, poor hearts, their work is very great, to feed the flock, watch over the whole, old and young, for the lambs must be watched over too, and fed, they being of the flock, to exhort, to teach, to rule with diligence, to search and enquire with great application into the state of the flock, and the frames and wants of each particular member, and to administer reproof, exhortation, comfort, instruction, or encouragement to each, as the case requires, to visit the sick and afflicted, and every way shew forth the care and compassion of the

Prince of shepherds; and seeing they have no fellow elders to help them, may their respective flocks be helped constantly to pray for them, have compassion upon them, make their work as easy as possible, avoiding all occasions of grief and discouragement to them, teaching and admonishing one another in love, remembering that the pastor must give himself to the word and prayer. That thoughtless person, whoever he is, who makes light of grieving, despising, and discouraging his pastor, knows not what he does. Better a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, whatever he may think of himself, and be cast into the sea; as the great bishop of our souls assures us. The eternal Spirit be the help and comfort of pastors and churches too!

NEOPHYTUS. I don't know how to be thankful enough unto you, my dear fathers, brethren, friends, and neighbours, for answering my desire in so particular a manner; and I heartily join with you in breathing after such a glory as you mentioned, and, I hope, earnestly desire that in the mean time, all godly pastors may be greatly encouraged and blessed; and their people filled with wisdom, holiness, peace, fervent love to each other, constant prayer for their pastor, and due christian respect and submission to him in the Lord. Now, if you please, a few words about *deacons*, though I am not much at a loss concerning them.

THEOPH. Unto the office of deacons belongs the actual exercise and application of the bounty and benevolence of the members of the church, unto the poor that are planted therein. Under the present dispensation the church must have the poor always with them, and according to the laws of Christ, and even the light of nature, it's a duty and a blessing to relieve them; and unto this the deacons are to excite and direct the members of the church; receive and faithfully distribute to the poor, as their various cases

and circumstances may require; and the care of this is also incumbent on the elders; but the deacons are helps unto them.

PHILAL. Their qualifications are recorded, 1 Tim. iii. 8. care and prudence in the choice of them recommended, and they unto faithfulness and diligence encouraged: a great degree of freedom, shall by them, in such a discharge of their duty, be attained, and great trust in them reposed.

CHRISTOPH. Our dear Redeemer has by many ways discovered his love to, and care of the *poor of the flock*. That they might not be discouraged, here is not only the care of them incumbent on pastors, teachers, and elders, but here is an office instituted on very purpose for them: and doubtless, the deacons should look upon it a special part of their glory that they are called to represent and shew forth the care, love, tenderness, and compassions of Christ.

SYLLOG. And therefore they should acquaint themselves as much as possibly they can, with the circumstances of the poor, acquaint the church with their necessity, stir up the particular members to a free contribution, according as God has prospered them, reprove the negligent, and if they persist in a neglect of their duty, then acquaint the elders, seek and take their advice; and in every thing they receive, or distribute, stand always in readiness to be accountable.

NEOPHYTUS. But deacons have generally other work upon their hands, besides the care of the poor; as, what concerns the Lord's table, and the maintenance of the ministry.

PHILAL. And that work is looked upon as theirs, because their proper business is to *serve tables*; therefore to the table of the poor, persons have added the table of the Lord, and the minister's table; and for ought I know justly enough.

NEOPHYTUS. I shall at present move no more

questions about them: all my friends that spoke, I thank for their labour, and you, father Epenetus, for your patience.

Epenetus. Patience! it has been a pleasure to me. I see my dear friends have read their Bibles with profit; and by all that they have said, do own that our congregational fathers in Old and New England, did so; unto the writings of whom, I see they are not strangers; but with the great *Owen*, it appears, they have been very conversant. All which I take the liberty to recommend to your serious perusal, and attentive consideration, my dear Neophytus: and now proceed with my story.

I told you what persons they nominated at *Caerludd* for their officers; and, I was going to tell you, that quickly after then, *Dewi* found in himself, a strong inclination to visit *Hyfrydle*, the place of his spiritual birth; and upon his mentioning it, two of the persons nominated for deacons, offered to bear him company. They all set out together, and arriving at *Hyfrydle*, were received with the greatest demonstrations of christian joy. *Buddiol*, the gracious landlord's house, was presently filled; the conversation and the attention very singular, and the affection strong. Christianity was their glory, and there was every thing that became it. At supper, *Dewi* put the landlord in mind of the feast they had when they supped there once together before; which renewed a discourse of the same kind, and whereupon *Ffyddlon*, the bishop, discoursed now with great enlargement and affection. After supper, the 133rd Psalm was read, explained, and sung, and *Ffyddlon* prayed; took his leave of his friends in the tenderest love, wished them a good night, and told them he hoped they should both see and hear his dear brother *Cywir* the teacher next day.

Theoph. Then I suppose the next day was the Lord's day, when the church were to meet for public worship, and their officers with them.

EPENETUS. It was so. But oh how glad was *Cywir* to see any of those christians of *Caerludd*, of whom he had heard so much. He embraced them, and could have kissed the very ground whereon they stood; and with a countenance that discovered greater love, pleasure, and delight, in his heart, than could be put into words, with tears of joy encouraged them in the Lord. And unspeakable glad were they to see another of the preaching servants of the Lord; and still the more glad, because they thought, by his name, that he was the person who encouraged and helped *Ffyddlon* so, at his first conversion. They asked *Ffyddlon* if it was not the same man? he answered, Yes; and, said he, we contracted such a friendship then, that if possible, we were resolved to strengthen the hands of each other, in Christ. and his work, till death.

In the forenoon *Cywir* preached from Psalm lxxii. 16. *There shall be an handful of corn in the earth, upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass on the earth.* The great design of his discourse was to shew the wonders of divine grace and power, in planting and strengthening the kingdom of the Redeemer, in the country and in the great city. The deep designs of love, and the effectual operations of the eternal Spirit, he insisted much upon, with the promises of mighty increase from small beginnings: and in hearing, *Dewi* and his brethren were filled with joy. And so they were in the afternoon, when *Ffyddlon* preached from Eph. v. 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.* In the evening there was a meeting of prayer, and when one brother or two had prayed, *Dewi* was desired to give some account of the then present state of Christ's cause in *Caerludd*, which he did; and began from that very spot where God began with *Yefan* and himself; in as particular a manner as conveniently he could; but it would

affect a person so much as to think how the assembly heard him. What tears of joy were there! A weight of joy as much as they could well bear! Even children present were amazed, and many of them converted, and many years after then, with the greatest pleasure to their children, and their children's children could relate the story of it. They sung a Psalm; and *Dewi* was desired to conclude in prayer; which he did with an enlarged heart.

CHRISTOPH. Oh! what precious days can our Lord cause his children to see; my soul longs for such warming seasons! Well, the residue of the Spirit is with him: he can make our cup to run over. Excuse me.

EPENETUS. There they staid all that week, constantly employed in, and entertained with some work that concerned the kingdom of Christ, and his worship; and *Cywir* was with them most part of the time, and a meeting being that week at the village where he lived, they went thither also. The following Lord's day, the teacher preached; and the pastor, in the afternoon, administered the Lord's supper. *Dewi*, and his two friends, were invited to partake with them, they accordingly did; and the love of the lamb of God in the midst of the throne, was unto them exceeding precious. They were greatly edified and strengthened; and in the evening of that day, the godly, with many prayers and tears, committed *Dewi* and his companions to the grace of God; and also their own messengers, who were now to accompany them to the city; for the fixed days were at hand.

NEOPHYTUS. Now, dear EPENETUS, do I long to have a particular account of the ordination, and how it was managed.

EPENETUS. You may depend upon it, NEOPHYTUS, that in primitive ordinations there was nothing pompous nor frivolous; every thing then answered the simplicity and power of the gospel. They set out for

Caerludd together, and comfortable was their journey, some encouraging occurrences by the way, I omit; at *Caerludd* they arrived, no sooner than exceeding welcome. The christians flocked about them, and they worshipped God together; and *Cywir* that very evening preached from Acts xviii. 10. *I have much people in this city.* The 72nd Psalm was sung, and the people dismissed: their hearts were all filled with joy; God hath made them glad through his work. *Yefun* rejoiced greatly, and his poor wife was helped in a good measure to shake off her heavy fetters, and her steps were enlarged. *Cywir* lodged at their house, and *Ffyddlon* at *Dewi's*; the other messengers in different families, they would not suffer them to be two in a house, they wished there had been more of them, that they might have one a-piece; they all coveted them, and prevailed upon them sometimes to change lodgings; love was great, and an eager desire to profit was urgent and sometimes prevalent: but those who experience the power of christian love and affection can blame no part of this.

THEOPH. You said the time fixed for ordination was at hand; pray, how did they employ themselves in the mean while?

EPENETUS. Why, really, they had but one day, and that was took up in prayer, conference, and advice; and things preparatory were fixed, that they might proceed in plain and good order the following day.

The church met betimes, and after several brethren had prayed, that their ascended Redeemer would guide them in their great work, and fill the day with his presence, and make it a blessing to late posterity, they chose a godly brother of good understanding, one *Diffuant*, to be their mouth, to speak for them, what might be thought needful in their solemn work. The messengers from *Hyfrydle* had a seat by themselves; and *Ffyddlon* stands up and says, "Dear brethren,

upon your request, we are messengers from the church of Christ at *Hyfrydle*, whose dear love and tender affection we were desired to deliver to you, together with this letter; which we desire your delegate, *Diffisant*, to read." He took it and read as follows:

"The Church of Christ sojourning at *Hyfrydle*, unto the Church of Christ sojourning at *Caerludd*, wishing all grace and peace.

Dear and beloved Brethren,

IT is impossible for us to express with what joy your letter was read and heard amongst us! It gave us some foretastes of the joy of saints in a glorious time to come: for you we have blessed our God and Father; and for you we continually seek his face, that he would fix amongst you elders of eminent abilities and service, that you may daily have, clearly know, and greatly triumph in the joyful sound; that your faith in Christ, the faith that worketh by love, and therefore attended with all gospel obedience, may eminently flourish; that your love may be fervent and constant to each other; and that when you have officers, you may in the Lord obey them; that your children may all speedily appear to be the Lord's, and for him; that your increase may be great; and that many evangelical churches may spring forth from you; and then many others from them. Let the people praise thee, O Lord! let all the people praise thee.

According to your request, we have sent our messengers, our much honored and beloved bishops, *Ffyddlon* and *Cywir*; and our dear brethren, *Buddiol* and *Tosturiol*. Receive them in the Lord. All grace and peace be with you, the sincere and fervent wish of your affectionate brethren in the Lord——ordered at our church meeting, &c."

Diffuant. Fathers and brethren, I do in the name of this church of Christ, thankfully acknowledge the tender love and regard of the church at *Hyfrydle*, and in the most sincere affection and joy receive you as messengers from thence; and hope we shall always look upon *the messengers of the churches as the glory of Christ.* 2 Cor. viii. 23.

CHRISTOPH. Really this entrance seems beautiful, and upon it there appears greater solemnity than upon all the pomp and grandeur man's fruitful wit can invent.

EPENETUS. Then *Diffuant* with an audible voice distinctly read their confession of faith, the church standing all the while; and then their covenant; at the conclusion of which they lift up their right hands to heaven, their zeal without being asked putting them thereupon, and so sat down. Then their delegated brother spoke to them as follows:

Diffuant. Brethren, we are, through amazing grace, a church of Christ; though we so lately wandered in the darkness of heathenism, and our minds filled with enmity against God. It is the Lord's work that we are here a worshipping church, and it is marvellous in our eyes. The ascended Saviour, the great Shepherd, hath us under his care as his flock, he feeds us, and does not disdain to gather our lambs in his arms; of his bounty we have largely tasted. Gifts unto our first-fruits he has been pleased to give, the great usefulness whereof we have plentifully experienced, and know they are designed for the perfecting of the saints. He empowers us to choose in his name, from among ourselves, those who upon seeking his face, and experience of their usefulness, we judge fitted by himself to feed his sheep, and to feed his lambs. We have as a church in the presence of Christ, the great Bishop of our souls, nominated and called our beloved brethren *Dewi* and *Yefan* to become our overseers in the Lord; their answers were humble and encouraging.

And now, brethren, that we may take each of them apart; if you do as a church of Christ renew your call to our dear and much honored brother *Dewi*, to be your pastor, to perform all the duties and labour of such an office, as held forth in the laws of our Lord, and if upon his willingness to comply with your call, and his being actually set apart to the good work, you promise all christian love, respect, and obedience to him in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands.--- Which they unanimously did.

Then, turning to *Dewi*, he said: Our beloved brother, you see, that with submission to the Lord, our Redeemer, the eyes of the church are upon you, and they do unanimously call you to take the pastoral care of them, and upon your compliance with their call, think to proceed immediately to your ordination; dear sir, we only wait for your answer.

Dewi. I am the Lord's: I am your's: and whatever gifts I have, they are your's. I am ready and willing to employ them in your service till death. I know I am insufficient; but through grace I have some knowledge of the great Pastor, in whom all fullness dwells. Casting myself at his feet, who has said *my grace is sufficient for thee, my strength is made perfect in weakness*, I accept of your call, and shall in the strength of the Lord apply myself to my work, upon your setting me apart thereunto; but earnestly begging your constant and fervent petitions to God for me.

Whereupon the whole church bowed their heads with tears of joy; and *Diffuant* said, Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly and actually set apart and ordain our beloved brother *Dewi* to the work and office of a pastor, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did. Upon this, *Dewi* with many tears, said, *Send now prosperity, O Lord!*

Then said *Diffuant* to the church: Brethren, our

Lord Jesus is our great Pastor and Teacher; none teacheth like him: he has declared his Father's name unto us, and will declare it, that the love wherewith he was loved may be in us, and he in us. Great are the mysteries of love and grace! Oh the depth of the promises! the riches of wisdom and grace treasured up there! Some part we have seen, and great things we trust are still to be revealed to us, and we hope the eyes of our understanding shall be enlightened to receive them. The labours of our dear brother *Yefan* upon the great doctrines of God's everlasting love, the person of Christ, the covenant of grace, justification through Christ, and in him, sanctification, perseverance, and glory, have been precious to us. We have esteemed him a sincere, affectionate, and tender teacher of babes; we bless God for him, and own that we stand in great need of his labours; wherefore, brethren, if you do now renew your call to our beloved brother *Yefan* statedly to explain the great doctrines of the gospel to you, for faith and practice, in the place, work, and office of a teaching elder, and if upon his compliance with your call, and actual separation to his office and work, you promise all christian regard to him and submission in the Lord; then signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did.

Then turning to *Yefan*, he said, Our beloved brother, you see how with submission to their great Prophet the church unanimously call you to be their teacher, to explain the scriptures to them, open the great doctrines of their salvation, and instruct them into their precious tendency to promote comfort and holiness, and with their newly chosen pastor take the oversight of them in the Lord: dear sir, in order to ordination your answer is desired.

Yefan. I stand in need of great instruction, but whatever understanding is given, or may be given to me, I am very willing to make use thereof amongst

you to the honor of Christ, and our mutual advantage, under the influences and operations of the Holy Spirit; and upon your setting me apart thereunto, shall look thereupon as my special office and work. Pray also for me.

Whereupon the whole church bowed their heads as before; and *Diffuant* said, Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly and actually set apart and ordain our beloved brother *Yefan*, to the office and work of a teaching elder, promising, in the strength of Christ, all tender regard, and due submission to him in the Lord; signify it by lifting up your hands,——Which they unanimously did.

Upon this, *Yefan*, in the most affectionate manner, and with many tears, said, *Uphold me with thy free Spirit; then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted to thee.*

Then *Diffuant* read the 23rd Psalm, and the whole congregation sung it under holy enlargements, with a loud voice on high, for God had made them very glad. Then *Diffuant* prayed, and with many thanksgivings offered up requests to God with great affection, suitable unto the occasion: and then spoke unto the church with a cheerful countenance; Brethren, God has graciously given us a pastor after his own heart, and our eyes see our teacher; the eternal God in his three glorious persons be with them, and with us together. I am thankful to the Lord for what he has done for us; and I thank you for putting me upon this great service, which I have so meanly performed." And upon that, bowed his head, and came down to a lower seat.

Then stands up *Cywir*, one of the messengers, and says, "Brethren, your faith we own to be the faith of Christ; and your order the order of the gospel; we shall, if the Lord will, carry the account of both, to the church we belong to; and now as their messengers,

and in their name, we wish you abundant success, in the work and comfort, in the worship of Christ, and give you the right-hand of fellowship." The newly ordained pastor and teacher, being in the next seat to them, received that plain christian token of communion in the most loving manner.

Then immediately *Ffyddlon* prayed, and then he preached from Acts xx. 28. *Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* And after him *Cywir* prayed, and then preached from 1 Thes. v. 12, 13. *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work sake: and be at peace among yourselves.* Then was sung the 87th Psalm, and *Dewi* concluded that day's public work and worship in prayer.

THEOPH. Our beloved **EPENETUS**, we thank you for this brief account of a beautiful work. Unto us all I believe it is refreshing and instructing. May we see this glory upon all the churches!

NEOPHYTUS. I must own the work had a great deal of christian solemnity upon it, and I own myself pleased and refreshed: but pray, was not imposition of hands wanting here? Paul and Barnabas, when they were separated for some special service, had hands laid on them.

THEOPH. Right: extraordinary officers already, now sent upon an extraordinary errand, and to receive renewed extraordinary gifts and abilities for it.

NEOPHYTUS. But Timothy had the hands of a presbytery laid on him.

THEOPH. True: an extraordinary presbytery, for Paul was one of them; and Timothy had extraordinary gifts becoming an evangelist communicated to him thereby.

NEOPHYTUS. But Paul says to Timothy, *lay hands suddenly on no man.*

THEOPH. And the meaning is this: By that time things in christianity fell apace into the ordinary course wherein they were for many ages to continue. At first the saints enjoyed frequently the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, but, by that time, there were many thousands of christians for whom such blessings were not designed. Some of the servants of God had too suddenly laid on hands, and the expected extraordinary gifts, it's very probable, did not follow; therefore the apostle advises Timothy that he be not too sudden and rash in such an extraordinary step towards any man, preacher or no preacher, and so fall into the same sin with some others; but first be well assured by previous infallible assurances from the Holy Ghost to his own spirit, that such gifts were to follow. A fuller text against the ordinary imposition of hands cannot be found in the Bible.

NEOPHYTUS. But the first deacons had hands laid on them.

THEOPH. The hands of extraordinary officers, and for extraordinary ends, as quickly appeared in Stephen and Philip.

NEOPHYTUS. But pray, with submission, what is meant by the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands?

THEOPH. The gospel; held forth in the divers baptisms, washings, or sprinklings under the Old Testament; and in the laying on of hands on the head of the sacrifice.

NEOPHYTUS. Pray how did they ordain ordinary officers in the first churches, to preach and rule?

THEOPH. Only by lifting up of hands, were ordinary elders ordained in every church, Acts xiv. 23.

NEOPHYTUS. Then I wish they were only ordained

so still. Excuse me, dear EPENETUS, and proceed to the next day's work.

EPENETUS. The next day the church met betimes, blessed God for what they had seen and enjoyed the day before, earnestly desired the Lord to be greatly with, and eminently bless their pastor and their teacher; and begged his presence with the church that day in the great work yet before them; and after several had prayed, *Dewi*, the pastor, speaks to the church, for now there was no need of a delegated brother to speak: Brethren, we are sensible, that the whole work of watching over the flock is very great, as you have heard very particularly from the pulpit yesterday; we know we are weak and insufficient for such a work; nor can we think ourselves equal to any part of it: and you know that brother *Yefan* and myself are bound to give ourselves to the word and prayer, and labour therein, giving ourselves wholly thereunto; not excluding what we may possibly perform in the ruling and governing part: but reason we have to be very thankful that our Lord and King has appointed for and set in his churches, servants of his, whose proper business is to rule, to rule well, to rule with diligence. For such governments, as the Holy Ghost calls them. brother *Yefan* and myself, and so all pastors and teachers, have great reason to be thankful, for so we can give ourselves with greater alacrity and cheerfulness to our more special and constant labour in the word, as being well persuaded, through mercy, that the ruling part suffers not by our close application to this. We have already, as a church, fixed upon brother *Didwyll* and brother *Diwyd*, as proper persons to take the office and work of ruling elders among us. We gave them a solemn call thereunto, to which their answer was such as we desired; and now, brethren, if you do as a church renew your call to brother *Didwyll* and brother *Diwyd*, to take the care of you,

and watch over you in the Lord, each of them in the office and work of a ruling elder; and if upon their compliance with your call, and upon their being ordained by you to the mentioned office and work, you promise all christian regard and submission to them in the Lord; signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did.

Then said *Dewi* to *Didwyll* and *Diwyd*, Brethren, you see how it is with the church, they are willing, through mercy, to be ruled and governed according to the laws of Christ: his yoke they have took upon them, and with their eyes to him, their King and Law-giver, they earnestly desire you both to become their ruling elders; your answer is desired, that we may proceed. They both stood up, and answered to this effect; That they were willing according to the best of their capacity, to serve Christ and his interest in that church; and, though they apprehended the work of ruling elders to be great and weighty, yet, in submission to Christ, and the call of the church, they would not refuse the work, whenever set apart thereto.

Dewi. Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly and actually set apart and ordain brother *Didwyll* and brother *Diwyd*, each to the office and work of a ruling elder amongst you, and promise all christian respect, regard, and submission to them in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did.

Then said *Didwyll*, Brethren, pray for us. The government is upon the shoulders of our strong Redeemer, and of the increase of his peace, and of his government there shall be no end. Therefore in his strength we willingly undertake the work. And *Dewi*, with great affection, said, My heart is towards the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people: Bless ye the Lord.

Then *Yefan* stood up, and spoke to the church as follows: Brethren, the bowels and the compassions of

our Redeemer are very great; we have found them so; and we shall still find them so, because they fail not. He did always arise for the poor and the needy; and that they, who are liable to many discouragements, might take the greater notice of it, he has established an office in the church on purpose for them; and he raises up persons of bowels and pity to execute such an office. In the law of the Lord, we read, that the poor should never cease out of the land; therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy. The poor are evangelized, and the Lord tells us, he would leave in the midst of us a poor and afflicted people, and his church is in a special manner bound to regard and assist them. The deacons are the officers in the church, whose proper business it is to promote their relief, and every way encourage it. You have, as a church of Christ, solemnly called brother *Dyfal*, *Llawen*, *Tirion*, and *Haelionus* to be your deacons, and if you do now as a church of Christ, renew that call, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did. Then he desired the several brethren to give in their answer that they might proceed to ordination. They each one said, they were willing to serve Christ, to serve the church, to serve the poor in the office of deacons, if the church thought fit to set them apart thereunto.

Yefan. Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, and in the name of Christ, now solemnly and actually set apart and ordain the brethren *Dyfal*, *Llawen*, *Tirion* and *Haelionus* each to the office and work of a deacon, and promise due respect and christian regard unto them as deacons; signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did; and the deacons earnestly desired prayers that they might discharge their trust in the greatest faithfulness and compassion.—Then the 146th Psalm was sung; and *Yefan*, with great tenderness, judgment, and affection,

prayed, and immediately *Cywir* preached from 1 Tim. v. 17. *The elders that rule well count worthy of double honor*; and insisted much on the duty of the elders, and the people's too; then *Ffyddlon* prayed, and preached from Rom. xii. 7, 8. and the 26th Psalm was sung, and *Yefan* concluded the public work and worship of that day in prayer. Great was the joy of the church, and great grace was upon them all.

CHRISTOPH. Thus we see the first christian church in *Caerludd* was organized, and great was their beauty, great was their glory: now, dear EPHENETUS, let us hear how they went on, what success and comforts they had, and how and after what manner churches sprung from them? and how the keys of the kingdom of heaven were used?

EPHENETUS. Surely CHRISTOPHILUS forgets himself; is it not too late for so much as any part of that work? It is true, great comforts and success did attend them, and with trials also were they exercised, which if the Lord will, at a convenient season, I shall endeavour upon your request, to entertain you with; but, at present, our respective families want us, and the worship of God there calls us; and may his precious fellowship be with us.

NEOPHYTUS. I take the freedom for the whole company and myself, to return many thanks to our dear EPHENETUS; and for myself in particular, I would say, thanks to our ascended Prince, and thanks to you all, I hope I have profited in measure.

THEOPH. And I hope another opportunity, if Providence favors us with it, will be to our advantage; so that our profiting may appear to all. Mercy and truth be with us.

THE END OF THE THIRD DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE IV.

How members were admitted. An instance of a Believer baptized. An Instance of an Infant baptized. A converted heathen speaks his Experience. A converted Jew speaks his Experience. Both received. The Lord's-Supper administered. The Messengers depart. At Caerludd they provide for their Bishops. Resolve upon a christian School. Edgar the Master, ordained a Catechist. Private Meetings agreed upon. The number of believers great. A Separation into several Churches proposed and rejected. But in another way gained. The Order thereof.

THEOPHILUS.

DEAR CHRISTOPHILUS, how many teachers and instructors continually attend us! It may be well said indeed, that our God hath not left himself without a witness. The heavens declare his glory, the firmament shews forth his handy work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. The sun rejoiceth as a strong man, to run his race, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof, nor shut up from instruction offered thereby; the moon and the stars which our Lord has ordained; for he has garnished the heavens, his hand hath formed

the crooked serpent; Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south, publish and proclaim his greatness; for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that Indians and Pagans are left without excuse.

CHRISTOPH. Not only do the heavens declare his wonders, but our teachers come to our very doors, ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. The stone out of the wall speaks, and the beam out of the timber answers it; not an admired nor a despised flower in garden or field, but what preaches divine power and wisdom, and every spire of grass stands up for its Maker, as well as the lofty cedars in Lebanon. There is not a dust, there is not an atom, but powerfully pleads for God.

THEOPH. If we attend unto instruction, our grove and the spreading oak over us, will, at this time, furnish us with humbling thoughts. Don't we hear the singing of birds, and the voice of the turtle? Is not their portion very small? Yet don't they, in their way, praise him that formed and fed them? And are not our hearts backward to divine praises? though our God giveth unto us richly all things to enjoy! But here's our dear EPHENETUS and NEOPHYTUS, and I hope, the pleasing story will cause our hearts yet to burn.

NEOPHYTUS. So, worthy friends and neighbours, I hope I may now in my turn, take the freedom to think that your eagerness to hear the story brought you hither so soon; nor do I doubt but you have been already preparing our way into some orderly entrance thereupon.

THEOPH. I don't know that we have; we were only taking notice of the bounty of our heav'nly Fa-

ther, in providing for us so many means and methods of instruction, and were observing how our little teachers that sing among the branches, chide our backwardness to praise our Redeemer.

NEOPHYTUS. And, if a young man may speak, I think not an unsuitable introduction; for I do expect that we are now entering upon a soul-comforting account of the singing of birds, even the birds of Paradise, in a congregational church of Christ, completely organized. Our last conference concluded with the ordination of the officers: but our dear EPHENETUS told us, that comforts did attend them, and now I hope he'll favor us with the account.

EPHENETUS. The very next day after the ordination of their elders and deacons, was the christian sabbath, or the Lord's day: and because *Ffyddlon* and *Cywir* had preached two days successively already, *Yefan* and *Dewi* undertook the principal work of this. *Yefan* preached in the forenoon, from Eph. iii. 8. *Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.* *Dewi* preached in the afternoon, from 2 Cor. iv. 5. *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* God was greatly with them both, and with the whole church, and by his Spirit made their cup to run over. The messengers were also filled with joy; and *Ffyddlon* who was most acquainted with them, and therefore was very free among them, told them it was upon his heart to preach to them that evening, if they pleased to meet there at such an hour. They were glad to hear it; for the gospel was more precious to them than their necessary food; accordingly they met, and he preached unto them an excellent sermon from Acts viii. 8. *And there was great joy in that city.*

NEOPHYTUS. I thought we should hear of the singing of birds; the inhabitants of the rock should sing;

God hath done great things for them, whereof they were glad; I wish Great Britain was now filled with such melody: but, I have hindered you.

EPENETUS. The following Lord's day was to be the day for the church in a solemn manner to partake of the Lord's supper; and they had fixed upon the fifth day of the week they were now entered upon as a solemn day of prayer before God, that he would graciously prepare and dispose their hearts to an evangelical attendance upon him in that precious ordinance; some also who had been propounded for some time, were then to give in the account of their faith and experiences; and some stood ready for baptism.

THEOPH. Then I see, that to propound in order to fellowship, is a very ancient custom in the churches.

EPENETUS. Yes, to be sure, and great was the care of the primitive churches this way: they used great caution, and often persons stood a long time in the state of *catechumens* in order to an entrance into the church. And now this young church began to consider it as very expedient they should act with deliberation, and get as much acquaintance as possible with the person who offered himself to fellowship; that whenever he was received, he might have an abundant entrance into Christ's kingdom, the church being satisfied that his faith was unfeigned. Though it was a sore trial to them, to see that landlord, who discovered so much concern and affection, turn his back upon them and the truth, yet it proved of great use to them afterwards.

CHRISTOPH. And pray, what were those cautious steps they took, in order to preserve themselves pure;

EPENETUS. They might vary as the case required; but, in general, it was thus: The person who offered himself was examined by the elders; and, if they saw encouragement, they informed the church that such a person desired communion with them in the Lord's institutions and ordinances as a church-member; the

church then deputed two or three persons or more in their name, to visit this person so offering himself, discourse closely with him, upon what he knew, what he believed, and what he experienced, pray with him, instruct and encourage him, as they thought fit and needful; make all the enquiry they could about his conversation and behaviour, more especially that from the time of his first concern about his soul, and make report of all to the church at a convenient season. Sometimes this was received at first, and the person called to confess Christ in the church; but sometimes it was to be repeated as the church thought necessary.

THEOPH. I should be glad if you please to favor us with an instance, that we may familiarly understand how, and after what manner they received members?

NEOPHYTUS. I hope, if I appear rude and impertinent, my dear THEOPHILUS, and all my kind neighbours present will excuse me: EPHENETUS, having told us of some that were ready for baptism, I humbly desire, if it be not disagreeable to the company, we may be first favored with an example or two, for instruction, in what concerns that ordinance

EPHENETUS. It has been, I think, more than once already observed, that though baptism is an ordinance that pertains to christianity, yet it is no church ordinance, and therefore the persons principally concerned in that work, are the teachers, who are to administer it, *Go teach all nations, baptizing them, &c.* provided the subjects were proper, they were under no restriction as to time nor place, in the church assemblies or out of them; in open fields, or in private houses, they baptized. And, not to mention instances then past, but that I may go along in company with my story, I must observe to you, that the very next day after *Yefan* and *Dewi* preached, there came a person to *Yefan's* house, whose name was *Credadyn*, humbly asked for *Yefan*, and, with tears spoke to him as follows: "Being accidentally to hear you yesterday, what you said en-

tered my heart; and though I did not come to receive any thing, but to satisfy a vain curious mind, the great God, as I verily believe, opened my heart, and made me willing and desirous to receive something. While you were speaking of the unsearchable riches of grace, as exceeding suitable to the chief of sinners; I hope I saw my wound and my relief. Destroyed I am; but in Christ is my help."

Yefan. It is not very long since I met with the same mercy; and glad I am to see the same grace that touched my own poor soul, touch and reach the souls of others, and, I hope, I am humbly thankful that the God of all grace has been pleased to own my poor ministry for the good of any of my fellow sinners, and that he does already lead you to hope.

Credadyn. I am very sensible that I was without hope, though unconcerned: my danger was exceeding great, and my concern should have been in proportion to my danger, but I am ashamed and confounded to think on it, I neither knew nor desired a deliverer.

Yefan. Do you think you know and desire him now?

Credadyn. I hope I do; no relation nor friend can save me; the whole city can't help me, nor can the whole world relieve me; but there is one greater than the world, who, as you said, came from above, and is above all, he can save to the uttermost, and at his feet I cast myself for salvation; I do believe what you said is very true, that there is salvation in none but in Jesus Christ.

Yefan. And what makes you believe it is in him?

Credadyn. The divine almighty power makes me believe it; and that power, I find, does so, in opening my understanding to see that Christ, in person and office, is a fit Saviour for such as I am; and in making me willing thereupon to cast my soul upon him; he persuades me, I think, by his Spirit to do it, and I hope I am persuaded.

Yefan. Faith is indeed a persuasion; but what would you have me to do for you?

Credadyn. I renounce heathenism, and profess myself a christian, and desire to be baptized; I believe in Jesus Christ, and cast my soul upon him.

Upon this, *Yefan* ordered water, prayed with great affection, in a suitable manner to the occasion; and then observed unto what company were present, the wonders of grace in visiting the poor Gentiles, who thereupon, they saw, were flocking to Jesus, professing faith in him, desiring to be baptized in his name; and also observed, that this was the gracious performance of faithful promises, and particularly that in Isa. lii. 15. *So shall he sprinkle many nations*; which he said, our Lord directly referred to in Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go teach all nations, baptizing them,* &c.* and then took water and sprinkled or poured it on his face, saying, *Credadyn, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit*; and concluded in prayer, that the blessing of heaven might attend the ordinance they had been concerned in; and that God would give unto them enlarged acquaintance with his promises of sprinkling clean water upon them,

* WHETHER the text in *Matthew* has any reference to that in *Isaiah*, in the sense here intended, I shall leave to the judgment of the judicious reader; but as to the *mode* of baptism (though Mr. *Morrice* went so far as to contend, that immersion was *never* used in the Apostolick age) it should seem an equitable rule, that—as the most eminent criticks, commentators and lexicographers are divided in their verdict, respecting the acceptation of the term *Baptizo*, and consequently the intention of our Saviour's command *to baptize*; and as the *practice* of the disciples, whence we should gather in what sense they *understood* it, is attended with considerable difficulty, when reduced to any one *invariable* method—we should vary it according to circumstances, and in proportion as demonstrable evidence is wanting, refer the mode to the *private judgment* of the person or persons concerned. Hereby Ministers would discover a liberal impartiality, and shew that they are ever willing to embrace superior evidence.

baptizing them with the Holy Spirit! and carry them on into greater degrees of holiness to the Lord, and establishment in the faith; and particularly, that the newly baptized person might be enabled all his days to walk worthy of the profession he now made, and that blessed name whereinto upon his desire, he was now baptized. Then he encouraged and directed him to follow the Lord fully.

NEOPHYTUS. But were none baptized then, but those who thus desired it?

EPENETUS. Only such, and their children; the infants of the godly were then baptized; and the same day will furnish us with an instance of that kind: one *Graslawn*, who was baptized by *Ffyddlon*, when he was there before; and being then a married man, by this time he had a child; he comes to *Dewi*, now his pastor, and desires him to come to his house, to baptize his child. *Dewi*, being at leisure, immediately went, and some friends present, went along with him. When they came, *Dewi* ordered some water to be ready; and then went to prayer, desiring the presence of God with them, and the blessing of heaven upon them, ascribing praise to God for his unalterable promises to the godly and their seed; and for his effectual grace that could every way be as sufficient to an infant as to a grown person, for present acceptance and future glory. Then he gave his small auditory, a short, yet sweet discourse, from Jer. xxx. 20. *Their children also shall be as aforesaid.* And when he had done, he turns to the father of the child, and says,

“ Brother, all our duty, we hope, is precious to us, and the more so, because we lay hold of it in faith: there is always a divine testimony that true faith is built upon, pray what is that in God’s revealed will, that your faith fixes upon, with regard to your child?”

Graslawn, Sir the covenant of God with Abraham, Gen. xvii. 7. where God promises in an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto him, and to his seed after

him ; which promises were renewed unto, and pleaded by many of the godly after then.

Dewi. But, do you think, that though there is a change of the dispensation, these promises remain established and confirmed?

Graslawn. Yes, indeed do I; and should look upon myself so far, a wretched unbeliever, to question it: for, the text you read does most plainly assert it: and I read in Romans the 15th, that Christ himself confirmed the promises made to the fathers; which must be the promises that related to their children.

Dewi. But you know we are poor Gentiles, and not the natural seed of Abraham.

Graslawn. Sir, I do know that; and I know also, through grace, that even among the Gentiles, as many as are Christ's by faith, are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise made to him.

Dewi. But still, can you find that this promise entitles you and your's to baptism?

Graslawn. Yes, unto me with great plainness, Acts ii. 38, 39. *Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the promise is unto you and to your children:* I think unto any impartial mind it is here very plain, that interest in the promise, gives a right to baptism; and that all the called and their children, have an interest in the promise; and, by the grace of God, I put in my claim for myself, and my child.

Dewi. Then I hope you will always look upon yourself, under the strongest obligations to bring up your child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; give him the best instruction and example, plead with God for him in constant and fervent prayer, and if it be the Lord's will to give you opportunity, in due time and constantly plead with him for God.

Graslawn. In the strength of Christ I promise this.

Dewi. What is your child's name?

Graslawn. His name is Nathanael.

Dewi. This child, named Nathanael, I baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit;—and while he spoke the words, he poured the water on the child's face, then gave the child unto the father; and prayed that the glorious Prince that stands up for the children of his people, would graciously bless the child, according to his many great and precious promises, and bring it up for himself, and that he might, even in his childhood, appear to be the gift of God indeed: that free grace might be sufficient for the parents, enabling them to discharge all duties towards their child as christian parents; and that they and the church of God might have very early comfort in him; then blessed God for his covenant, which he had commanded to a thousand generations; and that according to it, our children should be established before him, and the kingdom of heaven theirs; and then expressed thankfulness for tender mercies to both the parents respectively, and earnestly desired that the God of the families of Israel would make his constant abode with them; and so concluded that service.

NEOPHYTUS. Unto me there appears a great deal of glory upon this: God's covenant established, his people comforted in an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, containing all their salvation and all their desire, and their children not rejected; the ancient olive tree stands, and though some of the Jewish branches are broken off, yet, I hope, I am thankful that we poor Gentiles are grafted in amongst the branches, and 'tis the same olive tree still, Rom. xi. 17. And the same rule eternally stands, if the root be holy, so are the branches. Oh! it grieves me that any of the churches of Christ should lose any part of this glory.

EPENETUS. *Oh, thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these*

his doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment, from them that pass by securely, as men averse from war. The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever. Mic. ii. 7, 8, 9.

THEOPH. But, I hope, dear EPHENETUS, that none of the inhabitants of Potheina shall be left, or suffered to straiten the covenant of grace, to stir up jangling and strife about pulling off garments, or putting them on, to lead silly women captive, and carry them away from pleasant and orderly churches of Christ, nor to take away the glory from their children. I hope the very God of peace and truth will make his abode with us; and I earnestly desire we may be led into more and more practical acquaintance with his fear, and the secret of the Lord will be with us, and he will shew us his covenant still in greater glory. And now, my NEOPHYTUS, shall we be favored with an account how they received in church members?

NEOPHYTUS. Gently, THEOPHILUS, you have almost broke my bones, shame covers me.

EPHENETUS. I told you before, that they had appointed the fifth day of the week, for a solemn day of prayer before God, to seek his face, hear his word, and attend to the work of his kingdom.

The church met betimes that day, and several brethren prayed with great affection, humility, and thankfulness before the Lord; then Cywir was desired to preach, which he did, taking for his text, Psalm xlv. 4. *There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God; the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High;* and while he preached, the whole church experimentally understood the truth of the text; they were made glad indeed. After sermon they sung the 46th Psalm; and then called those who stood sometime propounded to give an account seve-

rally of their faith and experience*. The first they called was one *Uniawn*, and he was directed to a place where he might conveniently be heard of all; and unto him *Dewi* spoke as follows:

Dewi. You are called now unto the greatest honor next unto martyrdom; to confess Christ with your mouth in the midst of a church of his. This is really a greater glory than Cæsar seems to be in possession of. This honor all the saints of God may, and should lay claim to. Our city is strong, salvation is its walls, and the gates are open for all who keep the truth to enter in: we are, by all the means we have used hitherto, encouraged to hope, that you know the grace of God in truth; an account of the work of God upon you, bringing you to this, is what we do now, as a church, desire.

Uniawn. I am, indeed, of the mind that to confess Christ in a church of his, is really a greater honor than any earthly dignity; and now I am called to it, I

* A minute declaration of Christian *experience*, as here exemplified, can hardly be maintained to be of *universal* obligation, since it would be difficult to produce any scripture precept or precedent for it, in terms sufficiently explicit to justify such a conclusion.—On the other hand, nothing is more evident than that every adult candidate for christian fellowship should give *some account* of his qualifications, to the church to which he is about to join himself. But how far, and in what manner, he is to give this satisfaction (seeing scripture descends not to particulars) must be resolved to such general rules as these:—*Do all to the glory of God;—Let all things be done decently, and in order,—and to edification.* The manner, therefore, in which a church should desire satisfaction in this matter, depends on a variety of circumstances; such as the capacity of the person,—his gift of utterance, &c. A detail of circumstances; from *one* may be very useful and edifying, but from *another* quite the reverse. Herein, as in most cases, *spiritual prudence* will be profitable to direct; whilst the greatest caution should be used by every christian society,—that nothing be accounted and imposed as a *necessary* term of christian fellowship, where *scripture*, and the evident *reason* of the case are silent. See TURNER'S *Compendium of Social Religion*, chap. iii. § 9. and Dr. WATTS'S *Terms of Christian Communion*. Quest. ii. iii. viii. x.

find my heart sink under the weight of it, though I esteem it a weight of glory, and would not, for all the world, be deprived of it. Whosoever confesseth Christ before men, shall be confessed by him before his Father; and I would in all humility, confess him here, in the assembly of his saints, where he is greatly to be feared. I hope I am brought to adore and fear him in some measure of faith, and I am to tell you how that work was begun upon me. and how hitherto carried on. The very time that your honored teacher *Yefan*, in his own house, before many witnesses, declared what God had done for his soul, my brother *Cyfiawn* was present, and reached by grace at that time; and entered at first into church-fellowship with you. It was not long before I heard of his conversion to christianity, and I immediately entered into the strictest observation upon his walk and conduct: and there, though I sought for somewhat to reproach him and his religion for, I found nothing but what I admired. So much meekness, tenderness, and love; so much hatred to what he apprehended sinful, and so much zeal for what he owned as his duty, that I began to think there must be something real in what he knew and professed. One evening I resolved to stay at his house till he had performed family prayer, if he would give me leave; which he cheerfully did. The 16th chapter of John was read, and in it, it is said of the Holy Spirit that he should reprove the world of sin, because they believed not in Christ. It struck me to the very soul; and I could hardly hear any thing afterwards that was read; my brother prayed, confessed original pollution, and actual transgressions, and mourned much before the Lord. I thought he had no more reason to mourn than I had: yea, my heart smote me, and told me I had much more reason to mourn than he; so under broken apprehensions of some dangers and unworthiness, I burst out into some tears, which, though, I endeavoured to hide, was perceived, and my dear brother, thinking I was under some con-

cern, with an enlarged heart, sent up strong cries to heaven on my behalf. When he had done he took me by the hand, and I hung down my head, but neither of us could speak a word. This was of the seventh day at night. I took my leave of him and the family in a way something odd; for I could not speak; and next morning I came again, and told him, I had a mind to go to the christian assembly along with him. He said, he was glad of it; and in family prayer that morning, mentioned me very particularly, that the God of all grace would that day visit me. My concern was great, and when I came to the assembly, and the assembly engaged in worship, I began to think what it might be to be *visited* by the God of all grace, as my brother desired; and for some time I was in expectation of it. But some how or other my expectation dropt; and while I was in that indolent way, he, who is now your honored pastor, said with a loud voice, *Hearken unto me ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry.* The words entered my soul; I fell down before the power of them; I owned I was far from righteousness, and yet so foolish as to be stout-hearted. I was made to loath myself in my own sight; original pollution and actual transgressions bewailed by my brother, were set in order before me; at the sight of them, and under the weight of them, I fell; and was sensible nothing in the world could help me: but when he came to speak of the Lord's bringing his righteousness near, even to them that were too stout to go to it; and that God's salvation should not tarry; I was led to have hope, that the Messiah would be even my Saviour. I found my poor soul willing to venture all upon him, and take his yoke upon me, let him do with me what seemed good in his sight. I went home with my brother, and told him how it had been with me; and asked him, was that what he meant by God's *visiting* me? He said, Yes; then said I, Brother,

God has answered your prayer; and has *visited* me with his salvation. In the afternoon I heard your honored teacher; and in his discourse, he mentioned the tenderness of Christ, as a Shepherd, towards the feeblest in the flock; and said, that we have the greatest reason to be confident of this very thing, that where he had but begun the good work, he would certainly finish it; it greatly encouraged me. I went home, shut myself up in a room, and tried to pour out my soul before God, and with great brokenness I did it; but a word that I heard, *he despiseth not the prayer of the poor*, was very encouraging to me. Ever since, I have endeavoured to follow the Lord, in all his appointments: and I am thoroughly persuaded that church-fellowship is of divine appointment, and I desire to follow him in that in his strength, so long as I live in this world.

Dewi. You said that you were led to hope the Messiah would be your Saviour, who do you apprehend is that Messiah?

Uniawn. Jesus, the Son of God, and the Son of the virgin, at the first called the seed of a woman, then the seed of Abraham, then the seed of David; God-Man in two distinct natures, but only one person: ordained to save sinners.

Dewi. And what do you think does he save you from?

Uniawn. From my sins, from the curse of the law, and from wrath to come.

Dewi. Have you then no sin, now he is your Saviour?

Uniawn. Yes, I have innumerable evils yet cleaving to my nature, and under a sense of them I daily mourn before the Lord, the God of pardons; yet they are not imputed to me.

Dewi. What then becomes of them?

Uniawn. They were all imputed to Christ, he bore them in his own body on the tree; he who knew no

sin, was made sin for me, that I might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Dewi. Who imputed your sins to Christ?

Uniawn. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Dewi. How could this be a deliverance to you?

Uniawn. Because it was so settled in covenant, that Christ being God-man, Mediator, should by his mediation, save to the uttermost: he represented his people; their sins being imputed to him, he by sufferings satisfied the Justice of God, and his obedience being imputed to us, we become righteous before God; and in his righteousness I desire to be found.

Dewi. But does not God require you to live righteously?

Uniawn. Yes, sure he does, and I find through grace in my soul, an earnest desire to be found in all my duty towards God and man; but no part of this is my justifying righteousness before God; but only the obedience of his Son, my Saviour.

Dewi. What is the rule of your duty?

Uniawn. The eternal moral law of God, which, the doctrine of faith, in the Son of God, establishes.

Dewi. What thoughts have you of the Son of God, as the Son of God.

Uniawn. He is every way above my thoughts; I am helped to submit my thoughts to what is revealed concerning him; that he is the infinite and eternal God, the same in essence and nature with the Father and Holy Spirit, but distinct in person. God is one, can be but one; but in the eternal God-head three persons subsist, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.

Dewi. How did he, being the eternal Son of God, become man?

Uniawn. By assuming, not a human person, but, a human nature into personal union with himself; and so every way appeared to be such an high priest as became us.

Dewi. But in confessing and serving this glorious Messiah, you must expect tribulation; and how do you expect to go through?

Uniawn. Only in the strength of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, and Sanctifier of the church; the spirit of prayer, of faith, of power, of love, and a sound mind.

Dewi. Brethren, if you have any thing else upon your mind to ask our friend before he withdraws, I beg you would use freedom.—But nothing being asked, he was desired to withdraw. Whereupon *Dewi* desired the brethren that had been deputed to acquaint themselves as much as possible with his faith and experience, to give a brief account of what they knew thereof.—They answered, that all the things he mentioned in the church, he had more than once declared to them, and other things of weight: that they had prayed with him; and had prevailed upon him to pray with them, they thought in a sovoury, humble, judicious manner. Whereupon *Dewi* said to the church, Brethren, if upon what you have heard of *Uniawn's* faith and experience, you judge him a converted person, a beleiver in Christ; signify it by lifting up your hands. Which they unanimously did. Then said *Dewi* to the deputed persons; Pray, brethren, what account can you give the church of his walk and conversation?—They answered, that they had made as diligent an enquiry as they could, and they could find nothing but what was agreeable to the profession he made; but, said they, his own brother *Cyfiawn*, is present, if you please to ask him. Then said *Dewi*, Brother *Cyfiawn*, you are desired to give the church your thoughts upon his conversation. *Cyfiawn* answered, that he knew nothing since God began to work upon him, but what was agreeable to that work.

Upon this. *Dewi* said to the church, Brethren, if upon what you have heard of *Uniawn's* faith, experience, and conversation, you do as a church of Christ, judge it your present duty to receive him

into fellowship, as a church-member; signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did.

Whereupon he was called in; and unto him *Dewi* said, This church of Christ have considered the account you gave of God's work upon your soul, and the account given of your conversation, and have judged it our duty to testify our love to you in the Lord, and receive you into fellowship with us. Wherefore if you do in this assembly, solemnly give up yourself to the eternal God in Christ, as your God, receive Christ as your Priest, Prophet and King, and give up yourself unto us as a church, promising in the strength of the Lord to walk with us, in the performance of all duties incumbent on a church-member; signify it by lifting up your right hand.—Which he did. Then said *Dewi*, We also as a church of Christ, (the church standing while he spoke,) promise in the same strength of our Lord to perform all relative duties towards you as a member of us; and so in the name of this church of Christ, I do receive you, and give you the right hand of fellowship: and may this entrance of your's into the visible kingdom of heaven, in this world, be attended with a mighty blessing. Amen.

PHILALETHES. His experience was good, and of the right kind; but what precious things did the questions draw out of him!

CHRISTOPH. Aye, precious indeed? But did he speak his experience trow, or did he read it?

EPENETUS. There was no reading of experiences in those days; though I look upon reading lawful, and in some cases very expedient: but, I must say, that plain close questions upon their faith and experience, are very necessary.

PHILOLOGUS. And no doubt, but in the primitive times, those, who had offered themselves to church-fellowship, and were waiting to be received, were called *catechumeni*, from their being examined and instructed in such a familiar manner.

THEOPH. And I know the country, where those who wait for entrance into congregational churches, are always from time to time, till they are received, said to be under examination. But there are more of them, though we thus interrupt the story; pray EPE-
NETUS, proceed to the rest.

EPENETUS. The next that was called was one *Jonathan Ben-Israel*, by birth a Jew; he was desired to stand as the former had done, and give unto the church an account of the work of God upon his soul. Accordingly he stood and spoke as follows:

Jonathan Ben-Israel. I am amazed at the wonders of Providence; and more amazed at the wonders of of grace! I was born at Bethany, within two miles of Jerusalem; Oh that I could say the Jerusalem that now is! My father *Israel Ben-Joseph*, was at Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified; and for ought I know, was one of those who consented to his death. However, when I was a boy, I often heard him speak of him with derision and disdain; saying he had seen that Messiah hang upon the tree. I was brought up in great prejudice against Jesus of Nazareth; and I thought on many accounts it was impossible he should be the Messiah, and particularly because, as I was often told, he was a mean man, a carpenter, despised and rejected of men, a servant of rulers, utterly unable to deliver our nation from the Roman servitude, much more unable to make Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth. And this prejudice was greatly strengthened in me for two considerations; first, that we knew from whence Jesus came; and then, I was taught to believe that whenever the Messiah came, he should abide for ever; which, as I thought, Jesus did not; and at once make our nation head of all. So that I must now to my very great shame own, that I was an *obstinate Jew*. But the miseries foretold by the blessed Jesus growing heavy upon the nation; and not knowing how soon the city of Jerusalem would fall into the hands of Roman revenge and cruelty; and

thinking, that though the great Titus in nature was kind, his armies might prove very cruel; and also having an inclination to see some other part of the world: I travelled through the lesser Asia into Europe; and having heard the fame of Britain, my curiosity led me to visit *Caerludd*, the chief city thereof; where I have now for more than three years resided, with satisfaction and safety. I am apprehensive I speak to a church of the Messiah, and with that humility of mind, which becomes a saved sinner, I do here profess myself to be a christian. How this was affected in and upon an obstinate Jew, you may take as follows: About two months ago, passing near this place, I saw several people enter, and thoughtlessly enough I entered along with them, not knowing whither, nor for what. In a little time I understood what the assembly was engaged in, and I was resolved to see it out. *Yefan*, your present honored teacher, took for his text, Luke xxiv. 25, 26. *O fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* The text seized me, and seemed to pierce me in the heart; and I quickly found that the very reasons why I rejected Jesus, were indeed strong reasons why I should receive him. I saw that the true Messiah must be such an one as Jesus was; that he must be despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that he was to be numbered amongst the transgressors, and that his hands and feet must be pierced, and that on his vesture they should cast lots; that he must drink of the brook by the way, and then lift up the head. Nothing like this did I ever feel; nor did I when I entered into the assembly desire to feel this. It was power that evidenced itself to be of God. And then I thought that the very first revelation of the Messiah expressed his sufferings in order to his glory; in that his heel was to be bruised. I then saw that the Messiah must come in that way, and undergo such things, or he

could not be the Messiah God had promised. I quickly returned to my lodgings, retired to my chamber, and desired the eternal God of truth now to guide me, and left my heart with him. I took the law and the prophets, which I had by me, and read and considered, still with mine eye to the God of truth that I might not be deceived. I found the sceptre had departed from Judah, and the law-giver from between his feet, and therefore that Shiloh the Messiah was certainly come. I found that Messiah the desire of all nations should come into the second temple, which is now destroyed by the Romans, therefore the Messiah is come, or into that temple he can never enter. And what put the matter out of all doubt unto me, was what I found in Daniel, that after threescore and two weeks the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself; and the manner and reason of his being cut off, I found more at large in Psalm xxii. and Isaiah liii. Then was I made to look unto him whom I had pierced, and I mourned, and was in bitterness. But in a little time I saw that thus my salvation was wrought, and thus the salvation of Israel was effectually provided for. I was led to venture my soul upon Jesus the Messiah, for peace, pardon, and purity. He is Jehovah my righteousness: so I have received him, and so I hope I shall walk in him. And since God has enabled me to receive his Son, Jesus my Saviour, I have been greatly refreshed in your assemblies, in the public worship of our Redeemer. Oh it pleases me, my brethren, give me leave to call you so, it pleases me to see Abraham's everlasting covenant unaltered. This turn that God by his Spirit has wrought in my soul, is not a turn from the *true Jewish* religion, but from heathenism as your's was, I neither knew nor worshipped the true God; not did I understand Abraham's covenant, the Mosaic dispensation, nor the revelation made by the prophets. I am a Jew still, and yet a christian, and in Abraham's covenant for

myself and mine, more than ever I understood till now, and as much as any of the godly ever were; and now I see that those who are not christians in truth, are not Jews indeed. I lay hold on Abraham's covenant now by faith, and profess myself, through grace, a believer in Jesus of Nazareth, as the very Messiah of God, and cast myself upon him for righteousness, acceptance, all grace and glory: and I hope I am helped to admire the wisdom of grace and Providence in bringing me to Britain to be converted; and here with you, do I desire to serve the Lord Jesus Christ as a church member, in all his evangelical appointments.

Yefan. Were you ever in a christian assembly, before the time you mentioned?

J. B. Israel. No, and had I known that to have been one, it's like enough I had not gone in; for I always thought they worshipped one who was not the eternal God, and I thought they rejected Abraham's covenant, which I knew was never to be broken.

Yefan. Then you thought the Messiah must be the eternal God?

J. B. Israel. Yes, yes, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The Prince of peace must be the mighty God, the Lord of Hosts is his name, and the God of the whole earth, Emmanuel God with us: and Jehovah our righteousness; in whose days Judah shall be saved and Israel should dwell safely; and because we thought this was not fulfilled in the days of Jesus, we thought we had reason sufficient to reject him.

Yefan. And how do you find this difficulty removed now?

J. B. Israel. His people are really saved by him now, and whether they clearly know it or no, they always dwell safely, under the care of their great God and Saviour. And, as he was to suffer, and then enter into his glory, he is gone to receive unto himself a kingdom, and to return; for *the Lord said to my*

Lord, Sit thou at my right hand till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool.

Yefan. Then you are satisfied now, that all divine worship is due to Jesus, though his appearance was once so mean?

J. B. Israel. That I am; and, I hope, I can say to him as the once unbelieving disciple did, *My Lord and my God.* Unto the whole church, God, in the person of the Father, says, concerning his Son, *O daughter, he is thy Lord, worship thou him.*

Yefan. Then the mean condition he appeared in once, is no stumbling-block to you now?

J. B. Israel. No; I see now there was a necessity for that meanness and humiliation, even unto death; for, if it had not been so, he could not have been the Messiah of God.

Yefan. What thoughts have you now of the law of Moses?

J. B. Israel. Honorable thoughts; I delight therein, after the inner man. The moral law is my perpetual rule; and the law of ceremonies and sacrifices, was, in a great measure, the gospel of our fathers, and was the shadow of good things to come, and of the whole Jesus the Messiah is the sum.

Yefan. What apprehensions have you of your natural state?

J. B. Israel. A state of sin and wrath; I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. I have lived in sin, especially the sin of unbelief, all my days; and, though I hope the Lord has given me faith of late, nevertheless I find that sin still cleaves to all that I do.

Yefan. The ancient Jews had their sacrifices and atonements for sin; under a sense of such sinfulness as you have expressed, what course do you take?

J. B. Israel. Only by faith, flee to him, who finished the transgression, and made an end of sacrifice

for sins, and by once offering up himself has for ever perfected them that are sanctified.

Yefan. How were you satisfied upon the other difficulty, as to Abraham's covenant?

J. B. Israel. You said, that though the covenant was now extended to the Gentiles, it was still the same; and you proved it from Isaiah xlii. *I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles:* and you made it plain that God never disannulled that covenant, that the law that was 430 years after it, disannulled it not, whatever came, whatever went, that did abide: that everlasting covenant of God to be a God to his people and to their seed; which promise Jesus confirmed; and the believing Gentiles, you observed, are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to that promise.

Yefan. Then you look upon yourself to be in the same covenant still, with the ancient Jews?

J. B. Israel. That I do, through grace; God never was the God of any but in, and according to, that covenant. He is my God in that covenant, and in the faith thereof I here solemnly give up myself and mine to him for ever.

Yefan. And what do you find such a faith as this tend to?

J. B. Israel. It worketh by love, puts me upon a humble walk with God, inclines me to all duty, and makes me earnestly desire communion with God and with his people.

Some more questions were asked, and freedom to ask more was offered, and the same method used with that I mentioned afore, and he was received into fellowship. Three more spoke at the same time; one of them was received, and the other two encouraged and continued as *catechumens*, for farther satisfaction: and *Yefan* concluded the day in prayer*.

* THE transactions of this day were entered in a *book*, which they called, *A book of remembrance, written before the Lord, for them that*

THEOPHILUS. And a good day too! may the eternal God do such great things for all the churches, and make them glad! Now, my dear NEOPHYTUS, propose what you please.

NEOPHYTUS. Gently again, O THEOPHILUS, though I have been instructed and refreshed, I have not yet so far recovered myself.

SYLLOG. Then I humbly think, that all order calls upon our dear EPENETUS, to give us some account of their breaking bread day, which, I understand, was just at hand.

EPENETUS. Only I must first observe, that what was done this day, was entered in a book, called, *A book of remembrance, written before the Lord, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name.*

CHRISTOPH. Well, what might be in Paul's parchments, whether epistles, paraphrases, translations, short sentences, took out of heathen authors, his authentic and original right to the Roman freedom, or some short account of the state of the churches, especially so far as he was more immediately concerned, or either of these, or neither of these, I believe, does not much concern us to know; but I am amazed to see such a clear account of a church-book out of scripture!

SYLLOG. If there was nothing of it in scripture, the very reason of the thing requires it; and all congregational churches abundantly experience the usefulness of it; especially where all things of moment, and only things of moment, are wisely and orderly entered, But, dear EPENETUS, proceed.

feared the Lord, and thought upon his name;—in which all things of moment were judiciously and methodically entered; and which they found abundantly useful.—And (without pretending to scripture proof, or searching into Paul's parchments) may not the considerations of order and utility, sufficiently recommend such a church book to every christian congregation.

EPENETUS. The Lord's day, in the forenoon, *Yefan* preached from that text, John i. 29, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world*; and in the afternoon, *Dewi*, who had seen the order of the church of Christ at *Hyfrydle*, after desiring the messengers to take their seats, and partake with the church, in a short prayer, sent up petitions to the God of all grace for his presence with them, that he would graciously fill their souls with faith and love, and make himself known to them in this their breaking of bread, that they might every way attend upon so solemn an ordinance in a becoming spirit, and receive from the Lord spiritual strength thereby. Then took that text, Rev. v. 6. *And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood the Lamb, as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.* With great affection he read the words, and with affection and enlargement, he observed to the church, first, a pleasant surprize the poor children of God often meet with; *I beheld, and, lo, a Lamb*; the apostle had heard of a *Lion*, and he beheld, and lo, it was a *Lamb*. Persons who have entertained heart-terrifying apprehensions of Christ, whenever they see him indeed, they see a Lamb, meek and lowly in heart. This was precious to poor ones newly drawn out of their distresses. Then he observed to them the dignity of a congregational church of Christ; a *throne*, living things and elders. In the next place, what made them indeed glorious, the Lamb in the *midst* of them; and then he desired them to observe his posture, *standing* ready to receive them, to defend them, and to be seen and observed by them: and then he prayed them to take a melting humbling view of him, a Lamb as it had been *slain*: on this he insisted much, the causes and consequences of his death; and why there must be in the midst of the church, a constant remembrance thereof; and, lastly, for their

great encouragement, he observed to the church, that the Lamb was omnipotent, he had seven horns; that he was omniscient, he had seven eyes; and that he was omnipresent, having the seven Spirits of God present in all the earth. The church, with tender affections and melting love, heard all that he said to these things, and found themselves in the kingdom of heaven*.

NEOPH. But, may I speak! was all this essential to the ordinance of the Lord's supper; or was it only what the ministers chose, as decent and expedient?

EPENETUS. The latter, to be sure; he thought seeing they had time, not to make indecent haste, but fill it up with becoming solemnity.

CHRISTOPH. Truly I am of that mind, that churches should not make this blessed work a hurry; and therefore better omit the sermon, or at least a great part of it, than come with a tired nature, with the time already spent, to attend upon so solemn a feast.

EPENETUS. Then after *Dewi* had finished his discourse upon the forementioned text, he takes the bread that was ready prepared upon the table, in his hand, and reads 1 Cor. xi. 23. *For I received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.* He explained the words unto them briefly, with some proper instructions how in their meditations to make present improvement of them, to excite faith in, and to love him who took hold of their nature; and then said, In the name of the Lord Jesus, and according to his example, I take this bread, and in his

* It will probably occur to the judicious reader, that some of *Dewi's* remarks and explications of the above text (as—the dignity of a christian church, &c.) are rather well meant than solid. But if any wish to see the above passage handled in a copious, experimental, sublime and heavenly manner, they may peruse that savoury and truly valuable piece intitled *Christus in cælo*, by Mr. Bradbury.

name, and according to his blessed example, shall give thanks.

Whereupon, with tenderness and true affection, he prayed that God would greatly bless the bread for the designed use, and that the dear church of God might be enabled to discern the Lord's body, and by faith feed upon the Bread of life, and in a worthy or becoming manner they might together partake of this feast to their growth in grace, true advantage and profit; returned thanks for the wonderful provision made in Christ, and through Christ, for them; blessed God for this institution and appointment, and desired they might be helped in faithfulness, holiness, and cheerfulness, to attend upon their dear Lord therein till he comes the second time.

Then *Dewi* read the next verse; *And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me.* He explained the words, assisted their meditations in remarks proper, and application pertinent to the present purpose: then said, In the name, and according to the example of our dear Lord, I break this bread; in remembrance of his spotless and sinless body that was bruised for our iniquities. And when he had broke the bread, he said, Take, eat. this is the Lord's body which is broken for you. Which they did, and all the while the tenderest passions of love and delight appeared upon them all.

Then *Dewi* read on; *After the same manner also he took the cup, and Dewi* (a cup of wine being before him) said, In the name, and according to the example of Jesus, our Redeemer, I take this cup, and after the same manner shall return thanks. Which he did, adoring the wonders of divine grace, justice, and wisdom in the blood of the Lamb, the blood of the everlasting covenant, the blood that cleanseth from all sin, and speaketh better things than the blood of Abel; desired God to bless that cup, and make it a cup of

blessing indeed, the communion of the blood of Christ, and that they might be helped by faith to drink of the wine of the kingdom, the best wine, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak; and that in the strength thereof, and refreshment received thereby, they might greatly rejoice in their Lord, as those whose cup runneth over.

Then he said, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me:* and delivered it to the next brother, having himself drank thereof, and so through the church it went, who, as the pardoned ones of God, thankfully received it.

Then he prayed at large, for the blessing of heaven on what they had been concerned in; and the church made from seat to seat a collection for the poor; then they sung a part of the 22nd Psalm, and concluded.

NEOPH. But you, my dear EPHENETUS, and you, my kind friends, bear with me still, I shall not trouble you about the irrational whims of transubstantiation and consubstantiation, that contradict and bid defiance to all principles of revelation, reason, and sense; nor shall I move upon lesser things, that concern gestures and postures, but I wish I could thoroughly understand the verses that follow those *Dewi* made use; *Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; but let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* I need not tell you how terrible those words have been to the minds of some.

EPHENETUS. I grant it, dear NEOPHYTUS, and I desire my friends here present, would endeavour your satisfaction.

PHILOLOGUS. A great deal of this terror arises from an inaptitude there may be in one language to

express the true meaning of another. Damnation we know is a word armed with terror, and by reason of use with us, seems to intend nothing else but eternal destruction under the indignation of the Almighty. But the word so rendered, was frequently used in another sense, and signified no more than any damage or disadvantage. So it is said of widows, who did not abide in a capacity of discharging the trust some churches might have reposed in them, that they procured unto themselves *damnation*, forsaking their first faith. That is forsaking what they were entrusted with, they procured to themselves the disesteem of the churches, and were losers thereby. So we read of persons who scruple the eating of some particular food, that if they eat they are *damned*; that is, they lose their peace of conscience in doing so: other instances also I might give; and I am, for my part, fully persuaded that no other damnation than present loss and disadvantage is meant by the word that looks so terrible to some in the texts you mentioned.

SYLLOG. Most certainly; for the apostle speaks to them, who, as he says, were sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be saints. It was a damnation that might attend them, who were beloved of God, and should be eternally saved. It was a damnation that self-examination was to prevent. Coming in a rash, thoughtless, unbecoming spirit to the Lord's table, as unto common food, not discerning the body of the Lord as sacramentally signified by the bread, procured it; and when they were judged or chastened by the Lord, the very thing intended by damnation, it was that they might not be condemned with the world. When they came in an unworthy unbecoming manner, they came to their own disadvantage.

PHILAL. Thus it stands: whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord in an unworthy, unbecoming manner, only as common bread and wine, is guilty of an abuse of the sacrament of our Lord's body and blood, Therefore let a person examine him-

self, and consider the design of the institution, that the whole is a sacred commemoration of the love, death, and sufferings of the Son of God, and not a common eating and drinking, then let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup; for he that eateth and drinketh of the same as common bread and wine, not discerning the Lord's body, signified thereby, eateth and drinketh to his loss and disadvantage; and is in the way to procure frowns and chastisements from the Lord. For this cause some were sick and weak amongst them.

NEOPHYTUS. My dear friends, I thank you, I am abundantly satisfied, and I heartily wish other poor weak souls like myself, may receive the same satisfaction. That word I often think of, *then opened he their understandings*; and the apostle's prayer for the Ephesians, *cap. i. 17, 18, 19.*

EPENETUS. I was going to tell you that there was a meeting that Lord's day evening, when *Ffyddlon*, greatly affected with the conversion of the Jew, preached from Rom. xi. 26, 27. *And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.* The third day of that week the church met; *Ffyddlon* and *Cywir* they both prayed with them and for them, and each in a short but sweet discourse, took their leave of them, in the most tender love and affection, commending them to God and the word of his grace. *Dewi* and *Yefan* also both prayed, and with many tears unto God they committed the beloved messengers, the church of Christ where they were planted, and the whole interest of the dear Redeemer. And early the next morning the messengers departed, carrying with them among other tokens of love and gratitude a letter to the church at *Hyfrydle*, which when they came home in a full meeting was read, and what they had seen of God's gra-

cious dealings they reported, and the church rejoiced, sung the praises of God, and gave him glory.

CHRISTOPH. The faith, the love, the zeal, and simplicity of those primitive christians! Well, whatever they had, they received, nor did they deserve any part of it; the grace of Christ is still the same, nor is his Spirit straitened. I hope this account will put me, so long as I live, upon more fervent supplications to the God of all grace, that he would bring me and all his poor children into more acquaintance with such a glory as this.

THEOPH. Now, dear EPHENETUS, what steps did they further take at *Caerludd* to build themselves up in their most holy faith?

EPHENETUS. Why, all the ordinary means of praying, preaching, hearing, praising their Redeemer, and conversing with each other, and other duties, revelation and reason required of them. But in order to strengthen the hands of their pastor and teacher, and to encourage them in the Lord's work, they met without their minister's knowledge, and after one brother had prayed, *Haelionus*, one of the deacons, spoke as follows:

Brethren; It is by the amazing grace of God we are what we are. Not long since in heathenism and now a church of Christ! It has pleased our exalted Prince and Saviour, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, to raise up, from amongst ourselves, persons eminently blessed with abilities for service in the work of the ministry, they were made use of for the conversion of most of us, and for the edification of us all. God has inclined their hearts, and made them willing to take the oversight of us, and our ordained bishops now they are. They took the oversight of us willingly; not for any thing of this world; they never asked, we never offered any thing of that kind. The love of Christ appears to be the spring of what they have done, and what they have undertook. The proof of them we know. They have addicted themselves to

the ministry; they give themselves to the word and prayer, they serve the Lord, they serve us. But though they never undertook this service amongst us from worldly views, we shall be the most ungrateful people if we consider them not. Entangle themselves with the affairs of this life they must not; they have undertaken to give themselves wholly up to our service in the Lord. They are persons capable of hard study and great improvement, let us not discourage them; let us not hinder ourselves. They sow unto us spiritual things; they should reap of our temporal things. I hope it shall never be said that either of them or any of theirs suffer in the least for their diligent attendance upon the work of the Lord amongst us. The ox that treads out the corn must not be muzzled, they have power to eat and to drink, they are worthy of double honor; and though Providence has entitled them and theirs unto a considerable measure of worldly substance, they for our sakes put themselves out of the way of improving it; and our Lord Jesus, the great Lawgiver of the church, says, that they who preach the gospel, should live by the gospel; wherefore, brethren, I humbly move for a present token of our duty to them, and subscriptions for the time to come.

Diwyd, one of the ruling elders, said, What our brother has moved for, appears a duty in the strongest light; well established upon revelation and reason; nor shall I add any thing to what he has said, unless some objections be made thereunto, only this, that as pretty many of us are persons blessed with considerable substance, so I hope by a cheerful contribution we shall make it appear that our substance is a blessing to us. And for my part, I offer this—and shall subscribe more; and do now in the name of Christ, whom I also, though unworthy in office, amongst you serve, call you every one as God has prospered you to this duty.

Whereupon a large collection was made; and immediately a very encouraging subscription. What they

collected was divided, and by the deacons unto the pastor, and teacher, their several parts were delivered; who owned the love of the church, and the love of others not yet members, in what was done, and were glad that their love to Christ, to his gospel, and to them as servants of Christ in the work of his kingdom, did, in so many instances, discover itself; and said they, return as you have opportunity our love to them, and assure them from the words of the Holy Ghost, that it is a fruit that will turn to their account.

THEOPHILUS. Beautiful altogether! Their ministers bargained not with them: love to Christ, and to the work of his kingdom, put them upon their duty; and the same love put the people upon theirs, and it was an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God, Phil. iv. 17, 18. Even so hath the Lord ordained, 1 Cor. ix. 14. Now, dear **EPENETUS**, let us hear what steps they further took to strengthen and enlarge the interest of their Redeemer.

EPENETUS. I shall not detain you with an account of their close and strict attendance upon Christ in his work and worship on the Lord's days, and on their monthly church-meeting days discretionally fixed the fifth day of the week before the Lord's supper day, nor with an account of the many occasional opportunities of preaching, their ministers with great zeal, fervour of spirit, and success made use of; but I must observe, that their love to, and care for the children of the church, was very great. The parents indeed knew they were to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; the precepts of Christ obliged them to this; and the everlasting covenant of Abraham confirmed by Christ, greatly encouraged them thereunto; but the church, as a church, looked upon them as standing in a special relation to them: and therefore looked upon themselves under a special obligation to take care of their education. And therefore after solemn seeking of God, they resolved upon a *christian school*, and upon all the ways and means needful to support it, to the utmost of their ability.

CHRISTOPH. Bravely done! but where could they find masters?

EPENETUS. God is never at a loss how to prosper the good purposes he puts into the hearts of his people. You remember I told you of one *Edgar*, converted by grace at an inn, when *Dewi* and *Yefan* were returning from *Hyfrydle*. This young man, as you was then informed, understood the Roman tongue well, and by reason of advantages he enjoyed, was a considerable proficient in the Greek language. While he was in the Roman army, God was preparing him for usefulness in a christian church. As soon as he ever had settled at *Caerludd*, next unto religion, books and learning seemed to be the business of his life; nor did his kind benefactors spare any cost in procuring him all the helps he could desire. This young man, being eminently religious, sound in the faith, and a very improving scholar, they fixed upon as a master; his brother *Cradog*, and *Alfred*, who had wonderfully improved in writing, and in several parts of the mathematics, they fixed upon as proper assistants, being also very godly.

CHRISTOPH. The wonders of divine Providence are such, that a believing adoration is always our duty; and distrust is our sin and shame. But how did they proceed?

EPENETUS. They appointed a solemn day of fasting and prayer; and they met betimes, and prayed in faith with great affection; their children were dear to them, and Abraham's covenant very encouraging; they pleaded it in great enlargement and fervor before the Lord, and committed their dear children to him, who according to that covenant was not ashamed to be called their God; and earnestly desired the blessing of heaven upon their designs, begging their seed might serve the Lord, and be accounted to him for a generation. When prayer was over, *Yefan* spoke to the church, as follows:

Yefan. Brethren; it is the will of our heavenly Fa-

ther, that we should use all the means he puts into our power, to bring up our childreu in the knowledge and the fear of the Lord. They are his heritage, his children, as our God and theirs, and they are our children as a church. We know that by nature, they are children of wrath, in whom is no faith ; but we know who hath said, *I will save thy children.* All his promises encourage our duty, and in his name and strength, we enter upon the use of all means that tend to their instruction and conversion. Our ascended Redeemer, who giveth gifts unto men, has been pleased to qualify some amongst us, to be teachers of babes, and others of riper years. Not to use such gifts, is to despise the bounty of our heavenly Benefactor. Of brother *Edgar's* capacity to catechise young ones, and to explain the great doctrines of the gospel, in some private exercises, you have had some knowledge. We have some reason to think that the apostle by a catechist or a teacher in Gal. vi. 6. means a person whose only business, as capacity and opportunity served, was to catechise and teach ; we are apprehensive such a person might be very useful among us, and we have reason to believe, upon proof and experience, that our brother *Edgar* is, in a very encouraging measure, qualified for such a service ; besides his capacity of teaching the languages ; wherefore, if you do as a church of Christ. call our brother *Edgar* to the office of a catechist and teacher of the principles of religion, occasionally in the church, and more statedly in the school, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they un-animously did.

Yefan. You see, brother *Edgar*, the place God has given you in the esteem and affections of the church. We are for committing to your care under God, the dearest and most valuable treasure we have upon earth ; our dear children to be catechised, educated, and taught by you in the solid and substantial principles of our most holy faith ; and as you see occasion, and as opportunity serves, to inform the church of your

success, encouragement or discouragement therein. Are you willing to undertake this work, which we look upon to be very honorable, and we hope will be attended with great usefulness, as a teacher upon every occasion, and call in our Israel? Your answer is desired in order to proceed to ordination.

Edgar. I am very weak and insufficient in all respects; but I hope, through amazing grace, that I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing, according to the utmost of my capacity, to serve the church and the children thereof, if set apart thereunto. But prayers I beg, I am a child, I cannot speak.

Yefan. Brethren, if you do as a church of Christ, ordain and set apart our beloved *Edgar* to the office and work of a teacher and catechist, promising all due encouragement and regard unto him in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they did as before.

Then *Dewi* prayed, that God, the God of all grace, would smile upon this design and greatly bless it; yea, that it might be filled with blessings unto posterity. That God would greatly strengthen his servant for the work to which he was set apart; and that others who were designed for his assistance, though not called into office, might be greatly blessed also, and made very useful; and that God would make that christian school, a seminary of learning, and eminent piety. Then was sung the 127th Psalm, and the day concluded in a large subscription towards the support of the design; in which subscription *Dewi* and *Yefan* gave a generous example. And thankful they were, that God had found out a way for their little ones.

THEOPH. For christian schools of learning I would always have a becoming value and esteem. In subordination to the grace of God, they are exceeding useful: they are gifts of God, despised by none, but men of ignorance or of a base design. The Jewish church had its schools of learning, out of which, generally, the Lord called forth his prophets, and the Holy Spirit mentions the learning of Moses as a desirable accomplishment:

without it, scriptures could not have been translated, nor can a great part thereof without it be explained. Many words, phrases, and expressions, in the original languages of scripture, vastly comprehensive and emphatical, which, without learning, can never be discovered, nor made use of for designed edification: and unto the defence and confirmation of the gospel, all that know any thing, must know that learning is absolutely necessary; and the more of it the better. Persons who despise it, know not what they do.

CHRISTOPH. We have great reason to be thankful to the Father of lights, from whom comes every good and perfect gift; for putting it into the hearts of so many of the godly in and about the capital city of Britain, even now in our days, to form themselves into a society for the advancement of learning in the churches. As men and christians they appear generous, and their design is worthy and religious. I hope an eminent blessing, unto the churches of Christ, this will prove, and their contributions will be a fruit that will turn to their account, in this world and in that to come. They honor God with their substance, and God will honor them. They desire to see the churches filled with godly and learned ministers, and I hope that desire of the righteous shall be granted. May all encouragement attend them! But how did they go on at *Caerludd*? And how did *Edgar* enter upon his work?

EPENETUS. Why, truly under much fear and sense of weakness and inability; he thought his strength unequal to the work, yet it was encouraging to him to think of that glorious promise, *my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness*: he desired the elders of the church to come and open the school in prayer, that there might be a sanctified entrance upon the great design: which they did, with great affection and enlargement; and when they had done, they said unto him, *Go in the strength of the Lord God, and make mention of his righteousness, even of his only*. This encouraged him; but the presence

of the Lord upon his soul, and eminent success in his work, quickly encouraged him more; for in a little time learning did so flourish, and early piety did so shine in the school, that the church thought it their duty to set apart a day of thanksgiving to God on that account, and with great solemnity and joy it was kept.

NEOPHYTUS. If I mistake not, *Edgar* bore a double capacity, or character, which was that of a schoolmaster, a teacher of languages, and that of a catechist, a teacher of the principles of divinity: did his ordination by the church comprehend both these characters, or only the latter?

PHILALETHES. Only the latter to be sure; religion was the foundation of the design, and a religious education and instruction was what they had principally in view: and whatever acquaintance with languages, he could offer, or they receive, it was all in subordination to christianity, as you might have observed in the account given us.

NEOPHYTUS. But whatever proficiencie they might make in learning, I find he could not carry them any farther than the Greek language, so whatever affection any of his riper scholars might have to divinity, and whatever desire to understand the original, he could instruct them only in that of the New Testament. It was a pity that a christian school, the foundation of which appeared so very religious, should be so deficient.

EPENETUS. But this defect was quickly made up; I told you of the conversion of *Jonathan Ben-Israel*, the Jew; and now I must tell you that he proved of vast use to the church and to the school. He had two or three Bibles by him; and understood the Hebrew tongue well, and the Chaldee also; especially so far as it is made use of in the Old Testament. *Dewi* and *Yefan* could not rest but they must learn, and to their houses they took him, each every other week, and learn they did. And do you think that *Edgar*, also, having such an opportunity, would not improve it? he

did, and to a brave purpose; and besides, as, after some time, many eminently converted young men appeared very desirous to have good acquaintance with the Hebrew language, because the work was heavy upon *Edgar* alone; *Jonathan Ben-Israel* was preferred, if you please to take it in that term, to a Hebrew professorship, in the first, and in that famous christian school in *Caerludd*. And from time to time this school eminently answered its primary intention to strengthen and enlarge the Redeemer's kingdom.

NEOPHYTUS. I wish I could be favored with some account of the rules of that school, and the methods of education.

EPENETUS. You may depend upon it, that the methods of education are since then much improved: all that I think consistent with the design of my story, is to observe, that religion was the chief design of the school. They taught as they could, and diligently attended to the methods they thought best; but twice a day they never missed of proper attempts upon religious improvements, as the several capacities of those committed to their care could receive it. Their hours they strictly kept, all the discretionary rules they observed, and solemn prayer to God always begun and concluded the day.

THEOPH. May all christian schools begin and conclude in the same way! But as you have already said that this school eminently answered its primary intention, so I no way doubt, but God brought many eminent servants out of it to plead his cause, and publish his gospel, with desired success: pray what other methods did the church take to establish and enlarge itself?

EPENETUS. Most of the church were persons who lived by industry, and close attention to their particular callings; but yet many of them were persons of leisure, and they met together to consult how to improve their time most to the honor of their Saviour. They sought the face of the most High, in whose hands

their times were and desired the divine direction. To spend their spare time in taverns they knew was sinful, and could be attended with nothing but bad consequences, in all respects for time and eternity: they therefore desired God to direct them how to redeem their time, most for his glory, the enlarging his interest, and the real edification of their own souls. After consultation, they disposed of the church, as it then dispersedly stood, into several divisions; and they judged it expedient that every division should have a private meeting three evenings in a week; and lest they should be cloyed with the frequency of them; it was agreed that the first should be upon the meaning of some portion of scripture, the second upon some head of divinity, and the third upon the experience of what their souls had lately felt or found; each meeting to begin and end with prayer; and the hour fixed. In those meetings one person chosen monthly was to preside: and the most suitable person was to be the scribe. The minutes of those meetings were to be brought to a general monthly meeting, where sometimes the pastor, and sometimes the teacher, was to preside, and whatever was thought very pertinent and useful was then entered, laid up, and kept; what seemed empty and frivolous, laid aside; and whatever seemed unsound, marked, reproved, and opposed.

NEOPHYTUS. But our meetings here at Potheina are not ordered thus: pray what rule had they for what they did?

EPENETUS. The same with us; the general rules, to do all to edification; to build up themselves in their most holy faith, to exhort one another daily, to speak often one to another, and to see that the word of Christ dwelt in them richly in all wisdom, and such like.

NEOPHYTUS. Now you are speaking of the use they were to make of Christ's word, I am thinking how did they do for Bibles?

EPENETUS. Why truly that was a great difficulty upon them; but their diligence will sorely condemn the

indolence and sloth of a professing generation, who vainly trifle away their time in a land of Bibles in all variety of impressions. I told you of *Cradog* and *Alfred*, the ushers or under-masters in the school; and I told you that they had wonderfully improved in writing: and quickly taught and improved others. Besides, many that were added to the church could write well before they were converted, and now here was business, their hands full, for them all. Some transcribing one part of the Bible, and some transcribing another; and many a poor heart thought himself happy if he could borrow one of the gospels, or one of Paul's epistles to transcribe the same for his use; and work at it night and day, for another wanted it. Some scores were employed, and after some years close and diligent attendance to this work, they were pretty well stored. The young christians who improved well under *Edgar*, in the languages, spent a considerable part of their time in transcribing Greek Testaments, and some would venture upon the *Septuagint*; and also they procured from abroad all the copies they could. As for *Jonathan Ben-Israel*, much of his time was took up in transcribing the law and the prophets, and *Dewi* and *Yefan* having attained great acquaintance with the Hebrew, strictly examined and compared every paragraph, sentence, word, letter, and point.

THEOPH. I am strongly inclined to think that those meetings of conference were of great use to them at that day.

EPENETUS. Of very great use indeed. They were themselves religiously employed, out of the way of temptation; many of their children and acquaintance who desired they might sometimes be present, were converted there; and all the converted, who attended those meetings, greatly grew in the grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Besides, it was of vast advantage unto their bishops, who, as I said before, monthly received and considered the minutes of those private meetings. They from thence could judge the

state of the flock, how they improved in knowledge and faith; and also what temptations attended them, and what supports they had under trials: and if any thing disagreeable did but shoot forth, they had an immediate opportunity to check it. And oftentimes were they even taught and refreshed themselves in looking over the tender dealings of God with the church.

NEOPHYTUS. How glad should I be to see some of the minutes of those meetings, the method they used in explaining portions of scripture, or treating a head of divinity, or in declaring their experiences; but, perhaps you can give us some particular account of each?

EPENETUS. I don't see that the design of my story will carry me into that; but this in general I must observe, that in the first, they carefully considered the scope and design of the context, the phrases and words of the portion of scripture to be explained, considered what light other scripture might cast thereupon, and took notice of some plain observations that offered therein, and always inferred from thence what tended to strengthen faith, and promote holiness, and all obedience; in the second, they always kept close to the analogy of faith; and in the third, to sincerity and truth.

CHRISTOPH. Great was their glory, and my soul loves to hear of them; but in the use of such means, attended with success, such wonderful success as you have intimated, they must in time grow very numerous; pray what methods did they take to maintain the beauty of order?

EPENETUS. The ruling elders desired there might be more chosen, and ordained to help them for they thought themselves unable to discharge their duty towards the church. Therefore there were two more added to them, whose names were *Gryffydd* and *Addfwyn*, ordained in the same solemn manner, as they were at the first; only no messengers were called from any other church.

NEOPHYTUS. But then was not the ordination deficient?

EPENETUS. Not at all: messengers from other churches are not necessary to any ordination; though in many cases it is very expedient to call them; their advice in some cases may be helpful and their presence adds to the solemnity of the work, and testifies love and communion; but the sole and whole power of ordination is in the church itself.

THEOPH. But seeing their success and increase was great, they wanted, sure, not only more elders, but more places of worship; for a crowded audience, and thronged assemblies, cannot be very comfortable unto any; but unto weak constitutions must be very burthensome: pray how did they do?

EPENETUS. Truly, the ancient Britons were not persons of such weak constitutions, their diet was plain and wholesome, and themselves given to industry and exercise. They did eat and drink, that they might live and labour, and knew little or nothing of the unhappiness of those, who only live to eat and drink: lowness of spirits, *hyppos*, and vapours, they knew nothing of. But however the strongest constitutions, must think it very unpleasant to be always crowded, and besides, in many respects it hindered their edification; therefore the elders agreed to propose in a full church meeting, what appeared to them most convenient, for the glory of Christ, and the comfort of the people: and the day being come, and many having prayed, *Dewi* the pastor spoke to the church, as follows:

Dewi. Brethren; in the regions of the shadow of death, light has sprung up, and we who were sometimes darkness, are now light in the Lord! where it was said, *Ye are not my people*, it is now said, *Ye are the sons of the living God*. This amazing grace, we can never enough admire and adore: and this was yet a small thing in the sight of the Lord God; he has multiplied us, and we are not few; he has glorified us, and we are not small, and our children are as aforetime,

and, through grace, they make haste. God has been pleased not only to give us his word, his statutes, and ordinances, but has greatly blessed all for the enlargement of his kingdom; he has multiplied us with holy men, as a flock; and in our thronged assemblies, they seem to say to us, Give place that we may dwell. We have upon prayer, consultation, and mature deliberation, thought, that we should now divide ourselves into several distinct churches, yet abiding in fervent love, and christian communion: and have thought this might greatly tend to our edification, the spreading and strengthening the interest of our dear Redeemer. Thus your elders, retaining the dearest affection to you all, have judged, and now before you, as a church of Christ, our thoughts are laid.

CHRISTOPH. Poor hearts! how did they receive this?

EPENETUS. Universal silence for sometime filled the assembly, they all hung down the head and wept; and the elders themselves could not refrain. At last, one of the members, whose name was *Serchol*, stood up, and in a submissive manner, said, Will our honorable elders give me leave to speak a few words? Leave being granted, he spoke as follows:

Serchol. Our very dear and much honored elders, perhaps it may appear disorderly and rude in me, a private member, to speak without being called; but I humbly beg you would please to excuse me. If I can measure others by myself, as I suppose, by what appears, I may, we are all under a surprize. Under your ministry we were born, and now for a long time have been fed, nourished, and cherished; with submission be it spoken, to us you owe love and care, and to you we owe love and duty. We have given up ourselves to God, and to each other, according to his will; and in the best and most sacred bonds are we related to each other. What you have proposed, must *separate* us, at least many of us, from you our overseers in the Lord, and must separate us one from another. Many of us

with joy, have passed through the frowns of parents, and brethren and sisters, for the sake of Christ; and our being forsaken by them, has affected us no farther, than pity towards them prevailed. We were made willing to suffer the loss of all things for Christ: and in church-fellowship and communion with one another, we were resolved, and we have engaged, in the dearest love, to live and die: and must we now be separated from our dear brethren? Must we now be separated from our spiritual fathers, who have undertook the care of us, who break the bread of life to us; and watch over us in the Lord? No, let me choose rather to lie at your feet and die.—And with that he lift up his voice and wept; and the whole church, without being asked, lift up their hands, under many tears, to what he said.

CHRISTOPH. O EPHENETUS, how did the elders do to stand this?

EPHENETUS. Why truly, stand it at that time, they could not: only with many tears, they testified their dear love to the whole church, and dismissed the assembly; but there was nothing but sobbing, sighing, and tokens of grief, upon them all.

THEOPH. How many ways love has to discover itself!

EPHENETUS. Ways! it is impossible to discover or relate all the turns of love, and the various workings of affections, and duty, seen that day. Some could not speak a word, but only give their elders such a look, as signified a thousand things; some weeping and ready to fall at their feet, others hastened home to their own houses, to pour out their souls before God, and even some went with the elders home, and there stood or sate as many hours as Job's friends did days, and like them spake never a word; and those that spoke any thing, spoke as persons afraid to be answered.

NEOPHYTUS. Sure the elders never moved it any more?

EPENETUS. You shall hear. When the hurry of passions was over, and things began to settle into a sedateness in their minds, they met again as elders, mourned over any imprudencies that might attend their way of proposing what they still judged necessary; they desired the divine direction, and then called the church to a solemn day of fasting and prayer before the Lord, assuring them, that in the strength of the Lord, they would stand by them, and the interest of Christ, till death.

The day came, and solemnly it was kept in many prayers and tears before the Lord, and then *Yefan* the teacher, spoke as follows:

“ *Dearly beloved Brethren,*

Your love and our duty we value above life. We plainly see that you are taught of God to love one another; and we thankfully own, that your love to us abounds, and we hope we shall be helped to make becoming returns of love, and in the dearest love, serve you so long as we live. We have seen through grace, not only the kingdom of Christ, but the increase of it; and it is upon our hearts to see it increase more and more; and in the proper use of all means that tend thereunto, we hope we shall be found. In order to this increase and enlargement of our Redeemer's kingdom, seeing our assemblies are large and numerous, we have thought it expedient, that upon three Lord's days in a month, we should set up *two* worshipping assemblies, among our friends in some distant parts of the town. You see that God has blessed us with some able gifted teaching brethren; in those assemblies they shall take their turns, and brother *Dewi* and myself will take our turns also. Every month shall be still our church meeting, for worship and discipline, as usual, and the following Lord's day our breaking bread, when there shall be no meeting in the forementioned places. This we humbly think, continues us a church entirely one, and yet spreads the interest, and

gives a precious opportunity to our teaching brethren, to work for the Lord and his people; which we hope will be attended with great success and improvement." And then he, observing a serenity and satisfaction in their countenances, said, "If you do as a church of Christ, fix upon, and appoint this order; signify it by lifting up your hands." Which they unanimously did. Then they cheerfully sung the 87th Psalm, and concluded.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, this was a blessed turn; but who were those teaching brethren, and how were they ordained?

EPENETUS. *Edgar* was one of them; his brother *Cradog*, and *Alfred*, being very godly and gifted, and having attained good acquaintance with the languages, were called and ordained as he was: and moreover by that time, some other godly young men were nursed up in the school, to some degree of eminency, and appeared as trees of righteousness of the Lord's planting.

THEOPH. If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God: but things being put into this posture, pray what progress was made; and how did things reach the desired end?

EPENETUS. They quickly fixed upon and prepared two large and convenient places of worship: the first was opened by *Dewi*, and the other by *Yefan*, in very suitable and affectionate discourses, and each had a large audience, and both blessed with good success in the conversion of many heathen persons, whose curiosity led them to see and hear. God did so bear testimony to the word of his grace.

CHRISTOPH. Though they went forth at first upon this design with weeping, yet they bore precious seed, and they quickly are made to rejoice, bringing their sheaves with them: but I suppose God had a very great harvest before him; how did they proceed?

EPENETUS. As it was proposed and agreed on; they all took their turns, the teaching brethren, the pastor, and the teaching elder, and the Lord was

pleased to smile greatly upon their labours, and many were added unto them daily.

NEOPHYTUS. Then doubtless the elders quickly moved again for them to become distinct churches.

EPENETUS. They made no great haste for that: they saw all things working that way, and they gladly let them take their course. The young preachers were received more and more into the affections and esteem of the godly: their sermons were sound and affectionate, their conversation spiritual, savory, and edifying, their visits very useful, their prayers where they visited fervent and evangelical, their behaviour humble and meek, and their whole conduct holy and blameless; and besides, God blessed their ministry for the conversion of many; and they valued them highly as fathers in Christ: and after some time, in one of those new meetings, they had a consultation about becoming a separate church.

NEOPHYTUS. Seeing they inclined it, they might well think they were not like to meet with many difficulties, their elders having long before proposed it. So the business did not require much consultation.

EPENETUS. You are mistaken; They were afraid so much as to mention it, considering what had past; lest as they thought they should give too just occasion to the church and elders, to question their love and duty; and they thought they should look too much like people that were weary of the communion of the one, and the care of the other.

NEOPHYTUS. How did they get over this?

EPENETUS. Truly they were a long while first; and perhaps they had not got over it at all, if the elders, who partly knew their inclination, and approved of it, had not fixed upon a brother elder, and prayed him to put himself in such a way among them, as was most likely to draw it out of them; which he did. But when it was in some measure mentioned, they intreated, and over and over desired it might not be looked upon as proceeding from the least indifference of affec-

tion and esteem for the church or elders, whom they loved as their life, but that it was upon their hearts to attempt the enlargement of the kingdom of their Redeemer in this way, and should act therein only according to the judgement and advice of the church and its elders. He advised them to signify their desire unto the church in a letter, which, if the elders should approve of, might be publicly read in a church assembly. And accordingly they wrote as follows :

To the beloved church of Christ, whereof we whose names are under-written are members; and to our much honored elders, who have took the care of us in the Lord.

Honored and beloved,

We hope we shall always adore the God of all grace, who hath given unto us a name within his house, a name which would not for all the world have cut off. Of our dearest love and tenderest regard, we hope, while we have breath, we shall never give you the least occasion to doubt; and of your fervent love to us we have always had the most convincing tokens. It is, and we hope always shall be our desire, to attempt the greatest service we can go through for our Redeemer. Our honored elders sometime past, a time we can never forget, moved that the church might put itself, for the enlargement of Christ's kingdom, into several distinct churches. Having not duly weighed, nor considered the wisdom and importance of that motion, we then opposed it; but we have seen great reason since then, to judge that the design must be of God; though the time for its execution was not then fully ripe. We humbly think, with submission to any instruction you may offer, be it spoken, that it may be very consistent with our duty to God and man, that we whose names are under-written, should engage as a particular church, to strengthen and enlarge the interest of our Lord and

Saviour; and it is our earnest and humble desire, if you think fit, that you would dismiss us to, and assist us in the work, so much laid upon the hearts of,

Your very affectionate brethren, &c.

The elders approved of this letter, and the very first opportunity in a full church meeting, it was read; and though there were many tears about it, they being affectionately desirous of each others communion, yet, the church judged it expedient their desire should be complied with; and upon this *Yefan* reads a dismission ready drawn up as follows:

We, the church of Christ at *Caerludd*, having under the precious smiles of heaven, been blessed with success in our Lord's work and worship, so that to the honor of him, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, we must say, that the Lord hath made our cup to run over; and having received a request from our dear and beloved brethren and sisters,——*naming them*——, that we would dismiss them to, and assist them in the work and service of their and our dear Redeemer, as a separate particular church: and having considered the reasonableness of such a religious request, do now in thankfulness to our Lord, who has so increased us, and in dear and tender love and affection to them, give them up unto the Lord, all of them as holy and beloved, and unto each other according to his will; hereby declaring, that whenever they do in the presence of Christ, solemnly covenant, and agree to walk together, as a church of Christ, in the faith and order of the gospel, and formally and actually take upon them, such a relation to Christ and each other: then their membership here ceases, and they are become our sister church, in free, full, and affectionate communion in the Lord; and to them, we for ever shall wish all manner of peace, and true prosperity.

Yefan. If you do as a church of Christ, pass this

dismissal, to our mentioned brethren and sisters, as your act in our dear Lord's name; signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did; though many with tears: and in the church it was signed by the elders and many of the brethren.

THEOPH. How singular it was for the ministers to move first in this affair.

EPENETUS. True, but they did not seek their own; but that which was Jesus Christ's. In a very little time the other branch did follow their example, and were dismissed in a like manner: and on several and separate solemn days, formally entered into covenant, as separate churches; their confession of faith and covenant, being the same, at least for substance, with those in the church they were dismissed from, I need not give the account of; but to make their solemnities yet more solemn, they sent for messengers from *Hyfrydle*, who also came, rejoiced greatly to see the increase, and helped them much in the Lord. They quickly had also their pastors, teachers, ruling elders, and deacons, having known the proof of them, whose ordination was in the same manner with that of those already mentioned.

CHRISTOPH. It may be said of them indeed, that God did comfort them, as one is comforted of his mother, and that he made them rejoice with a great joy. It was the joy of God's nation, which strangers intermeddle not with. But doubtless, seeing thy had imperfections attending them, and were as yet in the world, they had their trials and afflictions also, and I hope it may be of use, to hear what some of their trials were, and how they were helped to discharge their duty towards God and man, under them: but I suppose you will say again, that our time fails us.

EPENETUS. Indeed it does so, else I could tell you, that trials they had, and heavy ones too, and that they endeavoured to observe all the laws of their dearest Lord under them, and so far enjoyed tranquillity under their trials: for you know that in keeping his commands there is a great reward.

PHILAL. So there is, dear **EPENETUS**, and upon a church of Christ striving against sin, there is a glory; and with the account of it, I hope we shall be entertained next opportunity. May all the blessings of the new covenant attend you, attend yours, attend us and ours, and all the Israel of God.

THE END OF THE FOURTH DIALOGUE,

DIALOGUE V.

Instances of the Preaching Elders' visits among their Flocks. One Day in the Week set apart by them for receiving the Christian Visits of any of the Church, that had a desire to speak with them. One Day in the Week spent in visiting the Church Members, where they thought most needful. The manner of their receiving Christian Visits of the Members. A brief Account of the Work of one of the Days at the Pastor's House; it was always begun with Prayer. What it is to grow in Grace, and how to be discovered. Spiritual Pride the Inlet to many Sins, and much Discomfort. The unchangeable Priesthood of Christ, as God-Man, the Foundation of Comfort and Joy. Tawel's Discourse with the Pastor, in order to her being propounded for Communion. The Pastor's Discourse with a Member's Son, in order to his being propounded. A remarkable Story of Mr. Wroth. An Account of the Teacher's Work on such a Day. A Discourse on the Covenant of Grace; of Faith in Christ, as the Lord our Righteousness. An Account of the Pastor's Visits to several Members in various Circumstances; his Discourse with the Children; Reproof of one disobedient. Account of the Teacher's Visits. A Father's distress occasions a religious Concern in his Child. Some account of the unpardonable Sin.

THEOPHILUS.

WHAT admirable beauty there is upon variety! Human minds in and according unto the divine ap-

pointments, are in proportion to their different capacities and improvements, wonderfully fitted to receive it, and be delightfully entertained therewith. What variety in worlds above us! how are the heavens stretched forth! how is the stelliferous space garnished with lights of different magnitude? how are the clouds supported, and made a weight for the wind? how does our God make small drops of rain, and, at times, by him thought most proper, order us the great rain of his strength! When often at the same time, the God of glory thundereth, and his voice upon many waters divideth the flames of fire! And upon all this variety, what exquisite beauty.

CHRISTOPHILUS. And I may say, what variety in this world, wherein, for our appointed time, we dwell! The terraqueous globe, how wonderful! the great waters, and dry land, how amazing and delightful! the mountains and the plains in great variety, how entertaining! The monsters of the deep, with the creeping things innumerable, and all upon the face of the earth, from the mightiest animal, unto the minutest insect, give pleasure to a contemplative mind, which pleasure still receives wonderful additions from that amazing variety observed. And to say no more, Potheina's green, Potheina's groves, not to mention Potheina's gardens, will afford such variety, and, upon the whole, such beauty, that, had we capacity, might be improved unto perpetual profit and the most valuable instruction.

PHILALETHES. I am greatly pleased with your observations, and will take leave to add, that in the dispensations of Providence in the government of the world, the greatest variety may be seen, and yet, upon the whole, the greatest beauty. If we view the several monarchies in Daniel, their rise, their reign, and their ruin; if we consider what history affords us concerning the spring, the flourishing state, and downfall of inferior dominions; if we look upon the unspeakable variety of revolutions, upon and among greater and meaner families, the many different circumstances of

the children of men, from the most potent prince to the poorest beggar, from the most tender infancy, through innumerable different forms of life, and enjoyments in health or sickness, strength or weakness, down to the years of trouble and sorrow, we shall be surrounded with amazing wonders; and what must still make the whole more wonderful, is this, that it is a possible thing, for persons under widely differing circumstances, to be equally happy. Oh how beautiful will Providence appear at last! when, for ought I know, we shall be enabled to take a view of the whole piece, filled with nothing but harmony and consent. Happy the person, who in his proper place, in prosperity or adversity, rests in possession of the chiefest good.

NEOPHYTUS. You make me think of a poem upon Providence I have somewhere seen, the conclusion of which I will take the liberty to repeat.

“ Cease then, nor under imperfection name,
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point.—
Submit—in this or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear.
All nature is but art unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And spite of pride, and in thy reason’s spite,
One truth is clear, whatever is, is *right*.”

THEOPH. Well sung, NEOPHYTUS, I am glad to find your soul so well tuned: but what do you think is all this an introduction to?

NEOPHYTUS. To satisfy me, that though you are persons of years, attainments, and great understanding, and I a raw troublesome inquisitive youth, yet there is a beauty upon this diversity.

THEOPH. No, my dear NEOPHYTUS, we had nothing of this in view; my attainments are but mean, and I am persuaded my dear neighbours will not boast

of theirs; and without flattery I must own, that you are blest with bright and useful gifts, and may they be continued and greatly improved to the comfort of Potheina. But you may remember, that in the close of our last conference, we heard of comforts and trials which attended the church at *Caerludd*. And if I may take the freedom to suggest any thing at present, I would humbly desire our beloved Epenetus, to give us some particular instances of the several officers in the church discharging their duty, in some particular families, and towards some particular persons, with the success that attended their service; which, if I mistake not, will offer to our view much of the work, comforts, and trials which belong to *social religion*, I hope in that variety whereupon beauty shall appear and instruction follow.

Epenetus. If variety constitutes a beauty, I must own it may be seen upon a church of Christ in this world: fathers, young men, and children; the feeble in the faith and the strong; praises and prayers; work and worship, public and private; rejoicing and mourning; reproving, exhorting, and forbearing one another in love; diversities of gifts, and differences of administrations; the officers, and all the members in their respective duties, many members, one body, God having set the members every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him; all standing in need one of another, acting in subserviency to the glory of Christ, and each other's happiness in the greatest variety; which no story can thoroughly delineate.

Theoph. My request does not intend that you should enter upon the account of their *public* worship, how the servants of God were enlarged or straitened in their public ministrations; nor do I desire that you should give us an instance upon every work or duty they might be called to in their more *private* service; for that would be impossible: but as the preaching elders had some time for christian visits among the flock, and the ruling elders had more, I should be

glad if you please to favor us with some instances of their service and work at such seasons.

EPENETUS. I did design something of that; for I could not fairly come at what I meant by their trials without it. But I heartily thank you for calling me thereto; for you have given me more particular thoughts than at first I had in view. I would have you then observe, that one day in the week, which being fixed was very well known, the preaching elders always kept at home, unless something very urgent fell out, to receive the christian visits of any of the church members, who had a desire to speak with them; and one day in the week they spent in visiting the church members, where they thought most needful.

CHRISTOPH. Pray, dear EPENETUS, give us some account of the former: why was it fixed, and how was it ordinarily spent?

EPENETUS. It was fixed, that any of the members who wanted to speak with either pastor or teacher, might know when to have open access to either of them. It was spent thus: Family duties being over, at ten o'clock there was an open door for whatever person came under any concern of soul, and being entered, solemn prayer was made to the Most High, that he would graciously bless the day unto such as were already present, and unto those who might yet come upon the great concern of the kingdom of heaven, that special direction might be given, and instruction sealed, according to the respective wants of the poor children of God providence might bring thither: then questions and cases were stated and considered, till near three o'clock in the afternoon, when the whole was concluded with prayer for a blessing on what they had been concerned in; and particular cases especially prayed over, with thanksgivings to the great Shepherd of Israel; and then the poor who were present, were always welcome to a plain refreshment, with their pastor or teacher; which the church considered and provided for, that their hospitality might in no sense be hurtful.

NEOPHYTUS. Now do I long to have one instance upon the concern of such a day as this: I know cases might be many and various; but do, pray EPENETUS, give us one.

EPENETUS. You must observe then, that one day at the usual hours, several being come to *Dewi's* house, and he having in a very affectionate manner committed them and himself to God in prayer, that they might have freedom to express in the fear of God whatever was on their minds, and that he might have wisdom to speak a word in season unto each of them, or unto any others that might yet come, and the day might be to the glory of the great Bishop of their souls, he spoke unto them as follows:

Dewi. My dear brethren and sisters in the Lord; what a wonderful mercy it is, that we are way-faring men, seekers of another country, that is an heavenly one! And though we have no continuing city, yet God is not ashamed to be called our God, because he has prepared for us a city of habitations. He is the Builder and Maker. We are through grace upon the road towards the celestial city, and being strangers and sojourners, as all our fathers were, must expect variety of circumstances by the way; darkness, crooked things, and rough places; but you know who has promised to make darkness light, crooked things straight, and rough places plain; I desire now you would be free, and tell me how does the Eternal Spirit, our gracious guide and comforter, deal with your souls?

A brother, whose name was *Crefyddol*, said, My dear pastor, I have for some time been under discouragement of soul. It is said in the word, that *those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in his courts*. When I compare present times with those past, and present enjoyments and resolutions with former ones, I cannot see that I grow at all. It is written, *They that dwell under his shadow shall return, they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine*; but I seem to make no progress in religion: and this con-

sideration night and day, draws a cloud over all my comforts.

Dewi. My dear brother. to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ is a very great mercy, and I must say it is also a great mystery. It is what God has promised to all his people, and ere long they shall plainly see how he has saved them and fulfilled his own word unto the uttermost. You are called to live by faith upon his word, when thousands of discouragements from what you do feel; or from what you do'nt feel, may fly in your face. The father of the faithful considered not his own body now dead, but believed in hope against hope; and David had fainted if he had not believed to see. True growth in grace can be found out only in the light of faith; and faith looks only to Christ; nor is it faith any further than it does so. As often as I have consulted my frames for encouragement have I been confounded; and yet, after much exercise that way; unto nothing am I more prone; and I now begin to think it will stick by me as long as I live. But, dear brother, the Lord increase your faith!

Crefyddol. Ay, dear sir, that's what I want: but I see the increase of nothing.

Dewi. But what if I was to tell you, that your growth appears to others, though not to yourself in this. Another day will discover that mourning under a sense of backwardness is to go forward, and that bemoaning one's self for want of growth is growing in grace.

Crefyddol. Perhaps I might think so of another: quicksets grow: but I am like a dry stick set in the ground, that never can flourish nor take root. I have a thousand perplexing thoughts, but I cannot tell you my case, though I came with that design.

Dewi. Ah, my dear brother! so far as I know any thing of the christian religion, you are now under the kind influences of heaven, growing up into Christ. To grow in grace, is to become a little child; and Christ

told his dear disciples, who carnally enough strove who should be the greatest, that in order to be truly great they must become little children. To grow in grace, is to grow out of self into Christ; and so become strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and whatever our fruit be, to bring it forth in Christ, having no confidence in the flesh. Be not cast down; God has dealt bountifully with you. It is wonderful grace, that you and I are not left to be utterly unconcerned about godliness and growth, and all things pertaining thereto. Abound in prayer; abound in praises; abundant reason you have for both. The more thankful you are, the more reason still you'll find for thankfulness. We have in some measure been led to observe the soul-humbling methods of grace and in our progress towards everlasting rest, we shall observe more of them; but be they what God will, so long as we are but humbled: true humiliation is true growth, and unto the humble, God giveth more grace.

Crefyddol. I return you thanks, I shall no longer hinder others, but humbly beg your prayers, that the Spirit of the Lord would help me to consider what you have said, and give unto me spiritual growth into Christ.

NEOPH. Well, by what I see in this account, it is possible a person may grow in grace and not know it; grow in grace and decay in gifts; grow in grace when heart and flesh fail: for it is growing little in one's own sight; seeking self less, leaning on self less, so growing out of self into Christ.

CHRISTOPH. That's right, my dear NEOPHYTUS, and it is a truth you may live to be very glad of. Memory will decay, invention will fail, capacity will grow weak, and a vigorous fancy feeble; all bodily organs, either with affliction or age, will grow more and more unfit for the service of the immortal part: and therefore, though there is a spirit in man that cannot decay, yet, dwelling in a house of clay, and making use of worn-out enfeebled organs, it cannot exert itself any longer in acts and operations so bright and

delightful; but the believer, as a believer, shall grow, and in old age be fat and flourishing: and the church of God has not been without many instances of believers, who have lived to be mere children in every thing but faith.

NEOPHYTUS. May I hear, receive, and retain this for the time to come. But, dear EPHENETUS, will you favor us with another instance in the service of that day?

EPHENETUS. Yes, perhaps, more than one, for substance; for you must think they were larger than my contracted story. While *Dewi* was reasoning with *Crefyddol*, a sister present, whose name was *Tyner*, seemed by her countenance, and by her many tears, to be under some more than common depression of spirit; wherefore *Dewi* said, Come, sister *Tyner*, how is it with you in your soul? *Woman, why weepest thou?*

Tyner. Ah, my dear pastor, I could almost answer as she did, *They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where he is*. What shall I say! My sins have separated between him and me. If there be such a thing as falling from grace, I am afraid that is my case. The brother that spoke, complained for want of growth; but I think I am dead. Heretofore I thought I had freedom before God in prayer; no sooner did I seemingly approach, but I thought his heart was open, and I thought he opened mine; and I thought I was presently in his bosom as the bosom of a Father, melting and rejoicing; but now I am like a child, if I am a child, shut out of doors. I don't know when I have seen him, nor I don't know when I shall. At the Lord's supper I used to be entertained with the children's bread, as I thought; but of late I am shut up, and am as one that has no acquaintance with the Bread of life, nor any desire after it; and have been often tempted to forsake the table and come at it no more. Under hearing the word, when I see it falls like the dew upon all around me, I alone seemingly am like Gideon's fleece. And as for my daily thoughts, they are barren, confused, sullen, and uncomfortable.—She broke off

abruptly under many tears, nor was there a dry eye in all the company. But after some time, says

Dewi. You say your sins have separated between you and the Lord, and it is a great truth, which we have all in some measure experienced, that sin is of a separating nature, and I must say of it, that it would separate eternally, only the merciful and faithful God will not suffer his people so to sin, nor will he suffer sin to have dominion over them: but what sin do you apprehend it was that led you into such a distance from the Lord?

Tyner. Through mercy I have been always kept from what persons call gross immoralities; none of my acquaintance have any thing to charge me with; but yet I have a great deal to charge myself withal, and more since this dark time came upon me than ever: but the sin that entered me into it, if I can form a right judgment of it, was a being carnally pleased with what I esteemed spiritual enjoyments; I thought other persons valued me, and thereupon overvalued myself; and at that very door my present calamity entered; and with that, an indifference to all the means of true improvement, some distrust as to some things of this life, and then a distrust in the promise of life and salvation; and upon these things I have been often ready to conclude, that I was never put among the children: however, the presence of the Father of lights I have not, for I walk in darkness that may be felt.

Dewi I sympathize with you; for I think I am, as you said, often like a child shut out of doors; and my soul is greatly concerned for you: but your greatest relief lies in this, that you have a Pastor in heaven that fellow-feels with you, and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able; and though you may be like one shut out and walled in, he will make a way to escape. Trust in his name, though you walk in darkness; among the children he has fixed you, and you shall find yourself safe at last, and shall dwell in the house for ever.

Tyner. Dear sir, I have tried to say so to myself; come, be contented, all will be safe at last: but I cannot be so satisfied, there is something all the day and the night which I want and have not; and I cannot help lamenting after the Lord; and when I am spent in my spirit into a sort of a dry indifference, then I think myself a thousand times worse than when in the dust I make the most bitter lamentation.

Dewi. You make me think of the church who sought her Beloved, but found him not; you make me think on Job, who sought him on all hands, but could not find him; you make me think of David in the deeps, and his soul cast down within him: and you make me think of Heman, who looked upon himself as free among the dead: but all these were holy, beloved, and safe, and so are you: and as one of them said, *When he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold.* You shall lose nothing but the dross.

Tyner. Sir, I hope God will make me very willing to lose that. The instances you mentioned, some of them I have thought of; and some little stay I have found, with a *may be*, I am among the children, and shall be there for ever: but as I said before, my present condition, I am neither willing nor able to bear.

Dewi. God does not require any person to be willing to dwell at a distance from him: to be willing to be without God, is a very great sin against God. And as for your present condition, God will not suffer it to attend you longer than he will bear you up under it; but the best advice that I can offer, while your great deliverance taries, take as follows:

Consider yourself as every way insufficient, and exceeding sinful. Consider Christ as infinitely great and good, able to save to the uttermost. Begin at the door at which you say your calamity entered, and set apart some solemn time to humble yourself under a sense of that pride, carnality, and unbelief that seized your heart, and be very particular therein before the Lord. Then look unto your Father's name, and try if you can

read it; that in Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7. and that in Jer. xxiii. 6. *Gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; his name is Jehovah our righteousness; though you walk in darkness, and have no light, trust in that name of the Lord.* Isaiah l. 10. And if you are so put to it as to question the truth of all the work passed upon your soul; come as a perishing sinner to Christ, who says. *Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out,* John vi. 37. a course my soul has often found useful. Then keep close to all duties of prayer, reading, and meditation; and wait on the Lord still in all his public institutions: *and though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.*

Tyner. Sir, I hope I shall endeavour to take your tender advice; but to wait upon the Lord at his table in such a frame as mine is at present, seems to be attended with many difficulties.

Dewi. If that ordinance was to be attended to by ministers and people only when they are in good frames, how often, think you, would the churches in the world commemorate their Lord's death, according to his command? When the ministers are in good and desirable frames, the people may not be so; when the people are in a good frame, it may be otherwise with the ministers. Christ never cramped his people's duty to a certain frame of their minds; all who cast their salvation upon Christ, whatever be their frames, are bound in duty to commemorate their Lord's death: and one cold indifferent step in this, may lead to a thousand: therefore, dear sister, omit no duty.

Tyner. I am glad you are acquainted with my case, I know you are a tender servant of the compassionate Redeemer; and I hope still that he will help you to pray, and hear your prayers on my behalf; that I may be delivered in a right way out of my present distress, may comply with every part of your counsel, and be for ever evangelically disposed to every duty. And may my soul go on in the strength of the Lord, come

wind, come weather; but, oh, may the sun shine, may the sun shine, if it be the Lord's will!

NEOPHYTUS. Our dear EPHENETUS did tell us of trials that did attend them, and now I see some of them; but however, I am glad it was thus with some of the saints in times past; though I have not made a great progress in the ways of religion, yet I find here some things I have in a measure wrestled with, and could mention to no body, but am now refreshed, and shall wait still for more refreshment, seeing according to what was mentioned, I may expect variety and diversity of cases.

EPHENETUS. The next that spoke was one *Kon*, at this time, at least a cheerful brother: says he to *Dewi* his pastor, Dear sir, I have met, in my short course in christianity, with variety of circumstances, frames, and trials, sometimes comforted and sometimes dejected; but I must set up my Ebenezer, and say, hitherto I am helped. Last Lord's day, in your discourse to the church, you mentioned that text, Heb vii. 24. *But this man because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood*; every word of it refreshed me, and I am still refreshed and taught; you dwelt some time upon it, and gave us the sense, which unto me has been attended with savour and success. The consideration of his being *man* as well as the mighty God, was of great use to me. Thought I, how highly is our nature dignified! higher than that of angels. The children partakers of flesh and blood; he himself took part of the same; and is not ashamed to call them brethren. And then his continuing ever, when all relations die, even the nearest and most delightful, and all enjoyments and endowments wither and vanish, when the most desirable frames vary and alter, and a thousand deaths may attend our most earnest expectations, this blessed man continueth ever. And to add to the weight of comfort, I was led under holy amazement to consider his unchangeable priesthood; he is in the highest office for us; offered up a perfect sacrifice here, and

ever lives to make prevalent intercession for us above. Oh, I can never express the joys of faith upon those blessed truths! I thought I knew something of what it was to be refreshed and filled. I had gone through some dry, distant, discouraging days; but thus the Lord seasonably stepped in to my relief. And I thought myself bound to tell you what God had done for my soul.

Dewi. It refreshes me to hear it, and to the God of all grace I would be thankful. And who knows but this may be of greater use to our dear dejected friends here than any thing I have said. But dear brother, such comforts as yours are always attended with other concomitant fruits of the Holy Spirit; the comforts of the loose, the vain, and the haughty, I desire no acquaintance with: how do you find it?

Kon. Sir, through grace my soul is led to God as my chiefest good; and I humbly hope whatever leads to him comes from him; I am made to mourn in the dust under a sense of my exceeding sinfulness, and to admire grace that ever I should be made to know any thing of Christ as my salvation; I am taught to love every duty Christ calls me to, dearly to love the kingdom of Christ, the children of God, and earnestly to desire the good of all my poor fellow sinners hating my own sins and theirs.

Dewi. My dear brother, all this is right, and all the comfort that leads to this is true comfort; and may your soul and mine be brought into more abundant acquaintance therewith. Make it the great business of your life to express your thankfulness to God in a holy, humble, close, and useful walk with him in every relation you are fixed in, or in any circumstance you may by Providence pass through.

NEOPH. The love and labour of this pastor lead me to think of the apostle's expression, *We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children*; but how great must the tenderness and love of the great Pastor be! I remember he tells his people, that they

should be comforted as one is comforted of his mother. But pray, **EPENETUS**, what further account can you give us of that day's work?

EPENETUS. The next that spoke was a certain woman whose name was *Tawel*; who came to have some discourse with the pastor, in order to be propounded for communion; and, in the presence of them all, she said,

Sir, I come upon a business of great importance; what, a few months ago I had no thought of, but now it takes up all my thoughts. I think myself bound, though I am a weak woman, to take the yoke of Christ upon me; believing his word, that I shall find it easy. I desire I may, while I live, bear my testimony for Christ, as my Saviour, and my Lord; and I think I cannot do that as his word requires, without being in church-fellowship; and it is my desire, if the Lord will, and if the church think fit, to be admitted a member.

Dewi. Are you a believer in Jesus Christ?

Tawel. Sir, I hope, through grace, that I am.

Dewi. What do you apprehend faith in Christ to be?

Tawel. Sir, I don't know whether I can answer you right; but I think it is, to trust him with all that concerns my salvation.

Dewi. What is it that puts you upon that trust?

Tawel. Truly, sir I have had many discouragements, and I did often think I could never come at it, and, at last, did drop all hope and expectation; and, ere I was aware, I found my heart carried forth to trust in Christ.

Dewi. What were those discouragements you met with?

Tawel. I thought I was such a vile unworthy sinner, that he would have nothing to do with me.

Dewi. What made your sins appear so great to you?

Tawel. While I was yet in heathenism, I did many things which my conscience told me I should not do;

and when I heard of Christ, I despised him ; and when I was struck with conviction that I was undone without him, I opposed those convictions, and endeavoured to stifle them ; then my evils appeared innumerable, and what added to my horror was, that all those evils did proceed from a nature universally defiled.

Dewi. And what do you think on't now ?

Tawel. Oh ! dear sir, I think worse and worse on't: I am vile and sinful throughout.

Dewi. Then if the greatness of your sins discouraged you from believing, and if unto yourself you appear more and more sinful, how dare you believe or trust at all ?

Tawel. It is not a month ago since I heard you preach from a text, which, I hope, I shall never forget: *It is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief:* and you many ways made it plain, that Christ did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance: and that he came to seek and to save that which was lost ; and that he was a Physician for the sick and wounded ; the rest would value him not ; and whoever trusted in him, did so as the chief of sinners.

Dewi. What makes you think, that he is a fit person to be trusted for salvation by the chief of sinners ?

Tawel. Because he is the mighty God, and has everlasting strength ; and because he assumed our nature, and in that nature suffered, and made satisfaction for sin, and because it is his very office and business to save.

Dewi. But what encourages *you* to trust him ?

Tawel. He says, Whosoever cometh he will in no wise cast out.

Dewi. But being come, and being received, what will you do for a righteousness to appear before God ? for he is of purer eyes than to look upon iniquity.

Tawel. Nay, I can do nothing ; I must trust Christ wholly for that ; surely in him have I righteousness.

Dewi. Does this trust then lead you to a neglect of any duty that God requires in his word?

Tawel. No, dear sir this trust puts me upon all duty to God and man; and 'tis this trust that puts me upon an earnest desire to be found in my duty as a church member.

Dewi. Whose work do you think this is upon you?

Tawel. The work of the Spirit of Christ; for had I been left to myself, I should have been an unconcerned heathen to this hour.

Dewi. And how did the first concern begin?

Tawel. In hearing, accidentally, two christians talk about salvation through Christ Jesus; and one of them said, that all the world was undone, and help no where else but in Christ: then, as I said, I was struck with conviction, but opposed it; but such was the grace of God to me, he would not let me alone; so I thought I would go and hear the christian teachers; and in hearing, it was made plain to me, that I was undone by nature and practice too. I tried, in my poor way, to pray for help and salvation; but my difficulties and discouragements increased, till I heard you preach the gospel from the text I mentioned, then God was pleased to open my heart to receive the things delivered. And I do here renounce heathenism, and before you, sir, and this company, profess myself, through grace, a believer in Christ Jesus; and desire to be baptized; and, as soon, as you please, propounded to the church.

Dewi. Can any man forbid water that she should not be baptized! who has, through grace, forsook heathenism, and is a believer in Christ!—And she was baptized straightway, in the same manner as *Credadyn* was. Upon this a sister of the church, whose name was *Astud*, spoke to her pastor as follows:

Astud. Sir, with a thankful heart I own the mercy unto Abraham, and the truth unto Jacob, which God sware unto our fathers from the days of old. He is a God that keepeth covenant and mercy; and my soul rejoiceth in his salvation: for it has not only powerfully

entered my heart, but graciously entered my house. Here is my dear boy *Ufudd*, not yet twelve years old, come to tell you what God has done for his soul; with an earnest desire to be admitted to the Lord's table, if the church of Christ can judge him fit.

Dewi. My dear child, though this is not the first time I have had talk with you, what thoughts have you of Jesus Christ?

Ufudd. Sir, I cannot tell you; but he is always in my thoughts, night and day. I think he is almighty; and I think he is my all-sufficient Saviour; and I think that in his worship he fills me with satisfaction, comfort, and joy.

Dewi. How came you to know that you stood in need of a Saviour?

Ufudd. My mother, sir, always used to tell me I was a sinner, that I was born in sin; and my father constantly, in family-duty, did mourn over his children, as children of wrath by nature, even as others: his words often went to my heart, and though I quickly forgot what he said, and what I felt, yet, when new concern came, I thought what they said was very true, because I did so forget God and myself, and regard nothing but what was vain.

Dewi. But how is it with you now?

Ufudd. Sir, one time my mother took me into her chamber, and bolted the door; I thought she was going to chastise me for some fault, but she said unto me, "My poor child, I travail in birth for thee, thou art ruined and undone by sin, thou art gone astray from the womb, thou hast destroyed thyself; I, thy tender mother, cannot save thee. Thou art under sin, thy mouth is stopped, and art guilty before God; evil shall not dwell with him; except thou art born again thou canst not see the kingdom of heaven:" and with that burst out into cries and tears, and I thought it would have broke my heart. But after a while she directed me to all the places of scripture she had mentioned, and went to prayer with me, with many tears

begged a blessing on what she had said, shewed me the tenderest love and pity, and went out and left me.

Dewi. And how was it with you when you were left?

Ufudd. I trembled much, and did endeavour to look upon the scriptures that she left with me, but I could not have any distinct thoughts upon them: only they seemed all to lie hard upon me; and my sins were so set before my face, that I could see nothing else. I had despised prayer, though my parents always told me that I should pray, and told me after what manner; I had neglected reading, and did stifle good thoughts when they did come; and in the public assemblies I never used to mind the worship of God, but trifle away the time in looking about me, or sleeping; and now I saw that innumerable evils did compass me about, and that all those evils did proceed from a very corrupt nature; and I thought also they made my nature more corrupt, and still more inclined to evil. I saw that what my mother said was very true, that I was indeed ruined and undone.

Dewi. And what did you do then?

Ufudd. Sir, I bemoaned myself, and thought I would pray to the Lord, that he would turn me and save me. And though I did say something like prayers often before, yet I never was *afraid* to pray till then; I thought I was too great a sinner, and thought God would strike me dead if I offered to speak to him: but I thought if I did not pray, I must perish; and into my mind came what I had heard and read of the man that smote upon his breast, durst not look up, but said, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner!* So I threw myself on the ground, and cried and prayed in great distress.

Dewi. And how was your distress removed?

Ufudd. I kept in the chamber all that afternoon, was not well in my body, but the load upon my soul was heavy; and my mother came frequently to me, and spoke to me what she thought best. In the evening, family being called together, says my father,

“What is the matter with this boy? is he not well?” Says my mother, “I hope he is under some concern about his soul.” But I can never tell you how it was with my father that evening in prayer. He did so plead Abraham’s covenant, that God would be the God of his seed; that God had promised that the children of his servants should continue, and their seed should be established before him; and that those, even among the gentiles, who are Christ’s, are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise; because Christ confirmed the promises that were made unto the fathers. He prayed in a very particular manner for me; and while he was at prayer I found my heart made willing to receive Christ as my Saviour, and to chuse God as my God, in that everlasting covenant my father had so prayed over. After prayer, my father took me to him, and said, “Come. my poor child, how is it with thee?” For tears I could make no reply; but after some time I said, Dear father, I am willing to be saved by Christ, I am willing to serve Christ.

Dewi. And I suppose you are in the same mind still?

Ufudd. Yes, sir, through grace, and have been ever since, and I hope shall be, so long as I live.

Dewi. Have you met with no discouragements upon your mind since that time?

Ufudd. Yes, sir, many: from my own wretched sinful heart, that spoils every thing I do; and once was sorely tried about *election*.

Dewi. Pray, how was that?

Ufudd. I had often heard of election in public sermons, and sometimes in the school, in our master *Edgar’s* opening the principles of religion to us, and I had read of it in the scriptures; but a dark thought passed through my mind, What if I am not elected?

Dewi. Then it did not make a long stay, seeing it only *passed through*?

Ufudd. But truly, sir, it was, I thought, a long while a passing, and I mourned under it, but could not

have the freedom to tell any body how it was with me; but one Lord's day, lately, you touched upon my very case, as if I had told it to you; and you observed, that it is a poor sinner's immediate business to make his *calling* sure, and as a perishing sinner, venture all upon Christ; begin at the foot of Jacob's ladder, and not at the top; and finding himself among the called he might then, in the light of Christ, fairly infer himself among the elected: and through grace I was helped to take your advice, and do find it answers the end you mentioned it for.

Dewi. And what makes you desire to be admitted to the Lord's table?

Ufudd. I think there is a very great glory upon a church of Christ partaking of that ordinance, in remembrance of their Lord's love and death: and he bids his converted people shew forth his death so; and I hope I am willing to serve Christ, but serve him I cannot without keeping his commandments. And besides, I do think there is, especially at some times, by what I have observed, some near communion in love there, between Christ and his church.

Dewi. You have been baptized in your infancy in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Ufudd. I humbly bless God for it; I adore the name of the eternal God in his three glorious persons, and give up myself wholly thereunto.

Dewi. My dear child, the Lord, I hope, will cause you to flourish in his courts. I shall, God willing, propound you to the church the first opportunity.

NEOPYHTUS. Well, I am convinced there is an amazing variety in the work of the kingdom of Christ; and I must own, there is a great deal of spiritual glory to be seen upon such godly service as this: but here are very few questions asked upon their doctrinal acquaintance with the principles of religion.

EPENETUS. That's not because *Dewi* neglected them, but because I designedly omitted them, lest I

should burden you with repetition. The substance of their faith you have had ; their examination as to doctrinal knowledge, was always according thereunto ; and those who could not give a satisfactory account were never received. Three things, in receiving of members, they, in those primitive days very strictly examined into, and considered, in all they received ; sound knowledge of, and assent unto the doctrine ; faith unfeigned in the blessed Redeemer, and how they were brought to believe ; lastly, a holy conversation, answerable to that doctrine and faith.

Thus I have given you a brief account of that day's work, which *Dewi* concluded in prayer to the Lord, for a blessing on what they had been concerned in.

CHRISTOPH. And, I think, a great day's work ; it does me good to hear on't. But I can't help observing, how necessary it is that those who preach the gospel, should be godly, converted persons themselves ? What could a moral unbelieving preacher, notwithstanding his doctrinal acquaintance with systems of divinity, have done with these ? Oh ! it makes me send up my earnest desires to the Father of lights, for a mighty blessing upon the religious views and contributions of our generous and honorable society, the glory of London. But pray, EPENETUS, had not the teacher his days and concern in like manner ? Now you are upon this story, before you enter upon their visits abroad, I should be glad, with the good-will of the company, to hear something thereof.

EPENETUS. He had ; the very same day in the week, on the same hours of the day, and all observed in the same method ; and in the evening of the day, *Dewi* and *Yefan* always met, to impart to each other the sum and substance of the work they had that day been concerned in. Thus were they brought into great acquaintance with the state of the flock : the usefulness whereof I choose to express in the words of godly Mr. Walter Cradock, who was himself a Briton. Says he, " We that are ministers should, in all our ministerial

works, propose some solid spiritual scope, or end, to our ministry, and to every part of it."

Beloved, I have known in my observation, many learned, godly, and otherwise able ministers, who took much pains, preached solidly, and yet in the end reaped, some of little, little, some no appearing fruit at all, of all their sweat and labour: some of them professing in their old age, they knew not that soul that ever was brought home to Christ by their ministry. And this, to my apprehension, seemed to be the chief reason, as to the work of man, they never did propose any particular *end*, or distinct *scope*, to their work; which indeed they could not well do; as having no spiritual acquaintance with the estates and conditions of their auditors. He that would convert sinners, or edify saints, ought to study souls, as well as books. And those ministers I have observed to work most excellently, and labour most successfully, who have accustomed to converse most with their hearers. I have also always thought, in reference principally to the discharge of my own work, that the mere preaching two sermons a week, as it doth not reach the practice of the apostles, Acts xx. 20. so is it not one half the work of a gospel-minister. As our frequent, familiar, spiritual converse with our hearers, doth furnish us with more skill to deal with the souls of others, so it conduces much to the quickening of our own, Rom. i. 11, 12. without which, we shooting, as it were, at rovers, must often miss the mark, if ever we aim at any: without which, we are as expert smiths, that make *curious* keys, and never consult with the wards of the lock; whereas a rude ill-shaped key, that is fitted to the lock, is of much use, the other of none at all. This surely is a common neglect in us, and a considerable defect in most of our ministers, which makes many of us labour, as it were, in the fire. Neither is it sufficient for us to say, when God's work doth not prosper in our hands, that yet our *judgment is with the Lord, &c.* Isaiah xlix. 4. unless we have in all things done the work of a minister, which,

as I said before, is not half done till we have attained to some complete measure of acquaintance with the souls of our people; nor at all will be done till we have the skill of speaking to their very hearts, and particular estates. It was once a speech of a reverend minister*, who, because of the multitude of his hearers, was often necessitated to preach in the church-yard, "That there was not one person in that congregation, whose spiritual estate he did not fully know:" and the success of his work was exceeding great and glorious. "Neither (said he) is there any sermon I preach, wherein I teach them not at least one lesson, more than any one of them all knew before; and yet I learn from them throughout the week, as much, or more, than they do of me on the Lord's day." Thus far he. And seeing you do desire to hear some part of the teacher's work on such a day, you may take it thus: Some company being come, and prayer to God being made, *Yefan* spoke as follows:

Dear brethren and sisters in our Lord, He is faithful who has told the church, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.* We and our children stand in need of instruction, and such is our present state, that we can receive nothing unless it be given us from above. We have neither capacity nor inclination, but what the Father of lights bestows upon us. This truth has a direct tendency to humble us before the Lord, and to quicken our attention to all gracious instruction he is pleased to afford; or, as it may be otherwise expressed, to sit at his feet and receive of his words. How great honor has our God conferred upon us, that he has numbered us among his disciples; put us among the children; given us the sure word of prophecy, as a light shining in a dark place; and the promise of his spirit to lead us into all truth! Unto this, one present replied, whose name was

* Mr. Wroth, that blessed apostle of South-Wales.

Gofalus And, dear sir, what a mercy it is, that the Spirit of God has appointed and does own such familiar means, as humble conference upon the things of God for our instruction! For my part I am amazed at divine wisdom and mercy, in appointing unto us teachers formed also out of the clay, whose terror shall not make us afraid. They are according to our wish; and I would be found among those who bless the Great Prophet above, who has not left us without a teacher here, with whom I can use freedom. I doubt not but you have been amongst us distinct and clear, upon the doctrine of the covenant of grace; but I am slow to receive, and weak to retain what I hear, even though the subject be so great: and do what I can, I am ready to think myself sometimes in covenant and sometimes out; yet from what I have often heard, I judge it cannot be so. Pray, sir, what may I strictly call a covenant?

Yefan. An agreement between two parties, equally free, to chuse or refuse.

Gofalus. What is the covenant of grace?

Yefan. An agreement between God the Father and Christ, upon the great concern of our salvation.

Gofalus. And pray, sir, how am I to consider the parties in this covenant?

Yefan. God the Father as offended on the account of sin, yet graciously proposing to his own Son, in the same nature and essence, yet now considered Mediator for man, terms, on the accomplishment whereof, the elect should be saved; and God the Son, as second Adam, and head of the elect, accepting the proposed terms, and undertaking the mighty work.

Gofalus And, pray, what were those terms more expressly, and the reward upon the performance of them.

Yefan. *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands, Isa. liii. 10.*

Gofalus. And how can I conceive of Christ, complying with what was proposed and promised?

Yefan. When he cometh into the world he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. I lay down my life, no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father, John x. 17, 18.

Gofalus. And how did our dear Lord fulfil the part he undertook?

Yefan. I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was, John xvii. 4, 5. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, Matt. xvii. 5. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14.

Gofalus. How am I to consider Christ, as receiving the reward of such covenant-obedience as this?

Yefan. We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, Heb. ii. 9. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world, John xvii. 24. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, Ps. cx. 3. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, John vi. 37.

Gofalus. This looks exactly like a covenant of works, and yet it is called the covenant of grace.

Yefan. So it is unto Christ a covenant of works, in the strictest sense; and our Lord's obedience unto death was meritorious in the highest sense; not only by virtue of the wonderful contract, but the ineffable value of his performance; for he who is the eternal God, assumed our nature, and purchased the church with his own blood, Acts xx. 28. Yet with regard to us poor saved sinners, it is a covenant of rich grace and mercy altogether.

Gofalus. Pray, what place and part does our faith bear in that covenant?

Yefan. Only a blessing of the covenant, attended with many other concomitant blessings. *For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him, Phil i. 29.*

Gofalus. But God promises to make an everlasting covenant with us; and you said, a covenant is an agreement between two parties, equally free to choose or refuse.

Yefan. Such is a covenant in a proper and strict acceptation, but God's covenant with us is a mere promise of absolute grace, even the sure mercies of David.

Gofalus. Will you please to give me some instances, where the covenant of God must be took in this last acceptation of the word?

Yefan. *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people, Jer. xxxi. 33. also Heb, viii. 10, 11, 12. and Heb. x. 16, 17. where we see, that by covenant we must understand a free absolute promise, without any restipulation on the creature's part. And thus it was given to our father Abraham, I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. Gen. xvii. 7.*

Gofalus. Blessed be the Lord, I hope I do in some measure see how it is, all grace freely given, and every duty in wisdom and grace provided for; the law written on the heart, and the sinner brought to lay hold on God's covenant. But pray, why are such promises called the covenant of God?

Yefan. Because they are unalterable, and contain the great things intended in and by his everlasting covenant, and for which it was made. God's unalterable purposes, with regard to things of an inferior nature, are called his covenant with such things. So his co-

venant with all creatures upon earth, after the flood, Gen. ix. 10 and his covenant with the day and with the night, Jer. xxxiii. 25. Unto both these the covenant of grace is compared, because in a like manner it is an absolute unalterable purpose.

Gofalus. Pray what was the covenant in the wilderness, and all that belonged thereunto?

Yefan. A veiled dispensation of this everlasting covenant of grace.

Gofalus. Are all God's people, under all the variety of circumstances and frames attending them still in this covenant?

Yefan. Yes it stands fast, it cannot be broken.

Gofalus. And does it still take in the godly and their seed, as of old to Abraham?

Yefan. Yes, Christ confirmed the promises that were made to the fathers; all the godly are heirs, according to the promise to Abraham, *As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* Is. lix. 21.

Gofalus. But how and if sore discouragements from the sinful ways of children, are upon the expectations of godly parents?

Yefan. *Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation and all my desire,* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Some will not believe except they see: but David said, he had fainted if he had not believed to see, Psal. xxvii. *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed,* John xx. 29.

Gofalus. We read indeed, *that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* May my soul walk and worship in faith and filial fear more than ever, and I shall be in the way to receive clearer views still, of this blessed covenant;

and may all the godly be helped to take hold of it in all its blessed promises. I return you thanks, dear sir, for your condescending labour of love, it has been refreshing, and I hope will be establishing to my soul, and for this I beg your prayers.

NEOPHYTUS. What a concise comfortable account is this of the covenant of grace, made with Christ as head of the elect! he performed the conditions: and rendered all the promises *yea* and *amen*! All things that pertain to life and godliness fixed and secured for ever! What encouragement is here to enter upon every duty! and what support is here under every trial! How has my poor mind been perplexed in reading large, confused, inconsistent treatises, upon the covenant! The parts of it, the parties in it, the conditions, the promises, the privileges and duties, and twenty puzzling things more! Some making it a downright covenant of works, and some a mixed one; and some as many distinct covenants as there are believers in the whole world.

PHILOLOGUS. The Holy Spirit, who knows best the meaning of his own words, expresses God's covenant of grace by a word, which is a testamentary disposition; no bargaining terms, but free bequeathments. All the blessings of the covenant come so to us; and all our duties are new covenant-blessings; and in a filial thankful spirit they are all to be performed; and not in a base mercenary way. Amazing it is, that any of the godly should ever fix upon faith and repentance, as the conditions of a proper covenant between us and God; and call that a covenant of grace.

SYLLOGISTICUS. And I must say, that amazing it is that any man of sense should do it, who grants that persons, by nature, are dead in trespasses and sins, under the dominion of a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. If the man is an unconverted man, he hates God, and he hates faith; and therefore will not agree to any such terms: If the man is a converted man, he believes already; and where is the good sense

of proposing a covenant with him, upon condition that he will believe?

NEOPHYTUS. But why does the Lord say, *I will make a covenant with you, or with them*, seeing it is a covenant already made?

PHILALETHES. You will, upon reading the several texts, quickly observe, that the Lord owns himself wholly the Maker of it, and therefore always calls it *his* covenant. It is not a covenant that does not subsist till we enter upon treaty with God, accept terms of reconciliation, and actually fulfil them; but as the venerable assembly of divines have excellently observed and asserted, "The covenant of grace was made with Christ as second Adam and Head of the elect, and with all the elect in him, as his seed." Therefore, when the Lord says, *I will make with you an everlasting covenant*, Isa. lv. 3. no more is intended, than that he would shew them his covenant, Psalm xxv. 14. and lead them to take hold of it, Isa. lvi. 4. When the Father of lights is pleased to say, *I will make*, we are often to understand *making manifest*; for whatsoever maketh manifest, is light: so in Psalm lxxxix. 27. *Also I will make him my First-born, higher than the kings of the earth*, speaking of Christ; that is, I will make known to him be such an one. And, Psalm cxxxiii. 17. *There will I make the horn of David to bud*; that is, there I will make the power of the Messiah manifest. So by making strait the way of the Lord, is meant a declaring of it to be so. It is in the covenant of grace alone, that God promises eternal life; and 'tis said of him, that he promised it before the world began, Tit. i. 2. And in the same manner it is said, that there was grace given us in Christ before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9. Both the texts must intend the everlasting covenant, which God in due time makes manifest, fulfils the promises of it in our souls in regeneration and faith, so leads us to yield up ourselves, without reserve, to him in that perpetual covenant that shall not be broken.

THEOPHILUS. This covenant contains all my salva-

tion, and all my desire Let my God smile, or let him frown ; let him shine upon me, or call darkness to pass over me ; let him appear in his glory, or for wise ends withdraw ; let him more than answer my expectations, or command disappointments to surround me ; let him renew my youth like the eagle's, or with strong pains afflict me ; still I am within his covenant, and every thing that attends me must be a blessing thereof ; for no curse enters there. This God is my God for ever and ever, and will be my Guide even until death.

CHRISTOPH. And, dear THEOPHILUS, I must add, the God of *mine*. Even when the greatest discouragements most sensibly touch me, and my house not so with God as I would have it, yet the God of the families of Israel is our God still. I know it is my business to believe, and plead the promise ; the repeated promise, the confirmed promise, to me and my children. God, even our own God, will bless us.

EPENETUS. God is ever mindful of his covenant, and he bids us remember it ; and I hope the eternal Spirit will establish our souls in the faith of interest in all the blessings of it.

I now pass on to another brother, whose name was *Egwan*, who spoke to his teacher as follows :

Sir, I was t'other day thinking within myself, how weak and feeble my faith was : it was as if I had none, and yet I found desires to believe, and thought it was my special duty to pray for more faith ; Lord increase my faith. That text came into my mind, *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee*. I took faith and trust to be the same, and I saw the ready way to more faith was to get more acquaintance with the Lord's name ; and meditating, in some measure, upon some of the blessed names he takes to himself in the scriptures, I came to that name in Jer. xxiii. 6. *And this is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness*. Dear sir, please to help me to understand that name.

Yefan. It is, dear brother, the name of Christ the

Messiah, as is evident from the foregoing verse, and in it you have two things for the support of your faith ; first, what Christ is in himself ; secondly, what he is to us. In himself he is Jehovah : unto us he is a glorious righteousness. Jehovah is a name that signifies *Being* ; because Christ always was, is, and is to come. As the eternal God, he is Being itself, and has given a dependent being to the whole creation ; *for without him was nothing made that was made* ; a scriptural demonstration that he himself must be the underived independent Being. He gave being to all promises of grace, and will fulfil all they intend. The name Jehovah is God's peculiar name ; that men may know that he whose name *alone is Jehovah*, is the Most High over all the earth. It would be the greatest blasphemy to call any mere creature Jehovah. But Christ has the name and the eternal nature intended by it. Our Maker is our husband the Lord of Hosts is his name ; and our Redeemer the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called. He is mighty to save, because he is the Almighty ; his obedience of infinite value, because through the Eternal Spirit he offered himself ; and he is a fit object of trust and worship, because he is the Lord our God. *Trust in the Lord for ever, because in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*

Egwan. Ah ! dear sir, though I am a poor weak soul, yet I would say of him, *my Lord and my God*. Let him be never so great, if he was not the great and the eternal God, I durst not trust him. It is idolatry to trust any creature, though never so great.

Yefan. As the infinite greatness of Jehovah the Saviour is a fair foundation for our faith and trust, so is his infinite goodness. *Abundant in goodness* is also his name, Exodus xxxiv. 6. 7, and with that goodness our souls are at present satisfied, and shall be for ever.

Egwan. Through grace I hope I can say, that in heaven I have none but the Eternal God the Saviour, and upon earth I desire none besides him. What you have said greatly refreshes me. Glad I am we have so great a Saviour.

Yefan. And still it must add to your comfort and mine, that he is a just God and a Saviour: he is our righteousness. *He who knew no sin, was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* We were children of disobedience; our sins were imputed to him, he bore them himself in his own body on the tree, the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all. He obeyed perfectly, and that as our representative, and his obedience is imputed to us for righteousness. *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin:* blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works. Though the best of our righteousnesses must be esteemed filthy rags; yet surely shall one say, *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.* The blessed Paul desired to be found in him, and in his righteousness; and a blessed robe it is that covers us all over, and in it we stand complete. Under a sense of all weakness and wretchedness attending us, here is a blessed name indeed, to which we may have constant recourse, *Jehovah our righteousness?*

Egwan. Dear sir, I thank you; I will go in the strength of the Lord God, and will make mention of his righteousness, even of his only.

NEOPHYTUS. Do they trust in the name of Christ, and desire to be found in his righteousness, who don't believe him to be the almighty and eternal God?

THEOPH. No, not one soul of them; how can they?

NEOPHYTUS. O my soul come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united!

EPENETUS. Then a sister present whose name was *Cariadus*, told *Yefan* with many tears, that her husband *Duwiol* was from day to day under great heaviness of mind, which she could not fully relate, but desired *Yefan* to come the first opportunity to visit him; which he said he would. And after some more discourse, the time for that day was concluded in prayer.

CHRISTOPH. Our beloved EPENETUS, I return you

many thanks, for answering my desire in giving us the account of some of the visits they received at home; and now I humbly request the favor of some account of their visits abroad.

EPENETUS. Most willingly, my dear **CHRISTOPHILUS**; you may remember I told you before, that one day in the week they generally make use of for the service of Christ and his kingdom, in visiting the flock, and especially those who stood in most need of christian visits. The state of the whole flock they knew, as faithful shepherds they fed them, administered unto each according to the wisdom God gave them, what they thought convenient and necessary; always watchfully bent against trifling away their time in vain diverting stories, or any thing corrupt nature might esteem pleasant, merry, and entertaining; as knowing very well, that such a *misimprovement* of their precious time would turn to their disadvantage, and the disadvantage of those under their care. They were servants of Christ.

I shall begin, as I did before, with *Dewi*; some part of his work, on one of his visiting days, you may take as follows;

Entering the house of *Cyfiawn*, of whom you have heard something before, he says, My dear brother *Cyfiawn*, how do you do?

Cyfiawn. O my dear pastor, I am glad to see you here. I look upon you as sent by the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls; therefore I am the more refreshed; for I see not only your kindness, care, and love, but as the spring of all, the tender love, care and compassions of my dear Redeemer! Who am I, that God and man should be thus mindful of me!

Dewi. And I must say, who am I, that I should be honored with any service among the saints! I might have been justly cast out, as a vessel wherein is no pleasure; but through grace I am in the vineyard, with my hand upon the plough of the kingdom, and I hope, esteem it dearer than my life; and I am greatly refreshed to find you in so evangelical a spirit, so that I need not ask, how do you do in your soul?

Cyfiawn. Through grace, God deals bountifully with me: I find *his ways are pleasantness, and his paths are peace.* He is pleased to strengthen me with strength in my soul; he makes all my duties a delight unto me. Though it is not always alike with me, yet I find he never leaves me; in all prayer he is pleased to draw me in measure near to himself; when alone he helps me to tell him all, and often speaks comfortable to me. In the face of all my sinfulness, under which I daily mourn, I have been helped to appeal to his mercy, in measure of faith that to mercy I shall go. In family-duty he makes himself precious to me; and in the public ordinances gives down, through abundant grace, foretastes of a future rest into my soul. And last Lord's day, while in prayer you mentioned that scripture, *Enter into thy rest, O my soul,* I thought I knew something of heaven in myself. Heaven was opened, my heart was opened, my soul entered, and of joys unspeakable I tasted; and though it is not with me now as it was then, yet something of the savour remains, and the remembrance is sweet.

Dewi. Ah! my dear brother, our God is rich in mercy; I am refreshed to hear you speak thus of him. Religion is a reality, and that through grace our souls know. God sheds abroad his love in our hearts, attracts our hearts thereby to himself; into communion with the chiefest good, through Christ, we are carried, and there partake of those joys strangers intermeddle not with. Oh! the mercy that *we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God!* how is it with your family, the little church under your care?

Cyfiawn. Sir, my dear wife is afflicted in body and mind, and I hope the Lord has sent you seasonably hither for her instruction and comfort: pray, sir, walk with me into the next room.

Dewi. My dear sister, *Rhinweddol*, (for that was her name) how do you do?

Rhinweddol. Dear sir, I cannot say but I am glad

to see you ; but I am afflicted in body, and pains have attended me now for some time. But the greatest pain of all is in my mind ; for I think God is angry with me, else he would not afflict me thus ; and stand up under his displeasure, I cannot.

Dewi. Unto the afflicted pity should be shewn, and I hope I find unfeigned pity towards you under your affliction ; but the pity of a poor sinful worm is nothing, when compared with the bowels and compassions of your risen Redeemer. You have often heard, that the people of God, while in this life, may be a poor and afflicted people, who nevertheless trust in his name. And I hope the Spirit of Christ will help you to trust in the Lord, under all your pains. As dear Job said, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

Rhinweddol. Sir, Distrust is it that makes my affliction heavy : for I am tempted almost to think, that were I an afflicted child I should not distrust. Under distrust my spirit is wounded ; and *a wounded spirit who can bear ?*

Dewi. Distrust is the affliction of children ; there is never an enemy afflicted with it, though under the dominion of it. He to whom distrust is a real affliction is a child ; *Lord I believe, help my unbelief.*

Rhinweddol. Oh ! my dear pastor, I feel what you say, and do find that it tends to my relief ; but nevertheless God has a controversy with me, and for my sins he afflicts me ; and before his frowns and displeasure I cannot stand.

Dewi. It is certain, that when we get to our Lord, where sin enters not, we shall be afflicted no more ; but at present, though afflictions may be called the frowns of God, especially when he also withdraws the light of his countenance, yet they are the frowns of a Father, and they come not in vindictive justice and vengeance upon us : and he himself says, that this is all the fruit to take away our sin ; and I hope you are willing to lose that.

Rhinweddol. Yes, I hope I am, but I have not that

zeal against it, as I should have against God's enemy, and that adds to my affliction also ; I have a complication of afflictions that I can't account for, nor I don't know how to stand up under.

Dewi. Your dear Father who does in love afflict, will not contend for ever lest the Spirit should fail before him, and the soul that he has made. In wise love he afflicts, and in wise love he will relieve.

Rhinweddol. But can the hidings of his face from my soul be in love ?

Dewi. Yes sure, else many of us should be often under wrath. The church sought her beloved, but could not find him ; and when he knocked, she being sinfully dilatory, he withdrew himself.

Rhinweddol. Oh may I but hope that all is in love, and that all will end well !

Dewi. He assures you in his word 'tis so, and as his poor servant I assure you 'tis so : *As many as I love I chasten and rebuke* : be zealous therefore and repent. He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve you ; it goes to his heart to do it ; in all your afflictions he is afflicted : but be of good cheer, submit to him and trust him, you shall come forth as gold.

Rhinweddol. Though my soul is cast down in me, yet I would not refuse to be comforted : I would thankfully own, that what you say tends greatly to support me, and encourage my soul to draw near to God ; and I humbly think, that whatever tends to bring me to him, cometh from him ; and if it does come from him, as I have no just reason to think but it does ; then though he afflicts me, he has a kindness for me, and remembers me still, though in his providence he speaks against me. Dear sir, pray for me, that I may glorify the name of my Saviour under the present dispensation, that I may neither think dishonorably, nor speak disrespectfully of him, but in all becoming patience attend and go through his pleasure. I thank you for your kind visit, and all that you have said ; I hope there was in it a word in season spoke to my soul.

Dewi. Then it was the Lord that spoke it, who has the tongue of the learned, and is an Interpreter one among a thousand; and unto him I would have you be thankful; and hope, through his mercy, in a little time to see your comforts abound in restored health; in the mean while may the Eternal Spirit, our gracious Comforter, greatly support you. Pray where are your children?

Cyfiawn. Children; come in.

Dewi. Oh! my dear little boy; are you a good boy?

Prydfferth (for that was his name) answered, No sir, I am naught all over.

Dewi. Who told you so, *Prydfferth*?

Prydfferth. My father and mother, sir, and have often proved it to me from God's word, sir.

Dewi. Do you remember the words that prove you to be naught all over, *Prydfferth*?

Prydfferth. Yes sir, some of them. *I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Every mouth stopped, and all the world became guilty before God.*

Dewi. How do you think to be saved from this dreadful condition, *Prydfferth*?

Prydfferth. Sir, I understand that Christ died for sinners; and that they shall be born again, that they may be holy and go to heaven.

Dewi. What do you say to God in prayer, *Prydfferth*?

Prydfferth. *Turn thou me, and I shall be turned;* is one part of it, sir.

Dewi. The Lord answer it speedily, my dear!

Then he said to *Cyfiawn's* daughter, (whose name was *Synwyrol*, and some years older than her brother) Come, my dear what is God?

Synwyrol. *God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Dewi. There are many spirits, and are they to be worshipped?

Synwyrol. God is an eternal infinite Spirit, sir, and there can be but one infinite Spirit, and he alone must be worshipped. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Dewi. And is our Lord Jesus Christ to be worshipped.

Synwyrol. Yes, sir : to the church it is said, *He is thy Lord, worship thou him : and let all the angels of God worship him.*

Dewi. Then is he that infinite Spirit, who alone must be worshipped.

Synwyrol. Yes, sir, according to his divine nature ; for he offered himself through the eternal Spirit : and I heard you sir, say, that by the eternal Spirit there is meant the divine nature of Christ.

Dewi. What other nature has he besides the divine ?

Synwyrol. A real human nature, which he assumed, sir. Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same. *There is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.*

Dewi. And is he to be worshipped as we worship the Father ?

Synwyrol. Sir, I think that there can be but one kind of divine worship, and that is due only unto the eternal God ; and if Christ was not the eternal God, he could not demand it, nor accept of it ; But Christ says, *That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.*

Dewi. But does not this make more Gods than one ?

Synwyrol. No sir. There is but one infinite God, one Divine Nature, one Divine Essence : for though there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, yet these Three are One.

Dewi. But why did the infinite God, in his second person, assume human nature ?

Synwyrol. That he might suffer and die for sinners ; for as God he could not die.

Dewi. And how are we to conceive of him with regard to equality or inequality with the Father?

Synwyrol. Being in the form of God, he thinks it no robbery to be equal with God; but as Man and Mediator, he is said to be the Father's Servant; and he says, *My Father is greater than I.*

Dewi. And what, as Mediator and the Father's Servant, did he go through for sinners?

Synwyrol. He became obedient unto death, he was delivered for their offences, and was raised again for their justification.

Dewi. Why was it necessary he should go through all this?

Synwyrol. That God might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Dewi. Where is the Mediator now?

Synwyrol. Highly exalted at the Father's right-hand, ever living to make intercession for the transgressors.

Dewi. What advantage is that to them?

Synwyrol. More than I can, and I believe more than tongue can express. But upon his mediation and intercession, the Holy Spirit cometh down to convert and sanctify poor sinners, and to lead and comfort the converted.

Dewi. You said that he was raised again for their justification; pray what is that righteousness wherein they are reckoned just before God?

Synwyrol. Only the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and not any work of theirs, no not their own faith.

Dewi. What does the Holy Spirit do in and for poor sinners when he comes?

Synwyrol. To be sure a great deal more than I can tell you, sir; he creates in them a new heart, makes his abode there, gives faith, works repentance, leads the person to seek God, to chuse him as his chiefest good, to breathe after his fellowship to yield obedience to his precepts, to submit unto his righteousness, to wish all prosperity to his interest, and to wait for his glory.

Dewi. And what do you find of all this work in your own soul?

Synwyrol. Very little, sir, but I am not without hope.

Dewi. What is the foundation of your hope?

Synwyrol. The risen Redeemer: other foundation can no man lay.

Dewi. And what does this hope put you upon?

Synwyrol. I would fain purify myself as he is pure; but alas! behold I am vile, and in every thing I sin.

Dewi. Under such apprehensions, what method do you take?

Synwyrol. As a poor perishing sinner, I lie at the feet of Christ, who is a merciful and compassionate High-Priest, who saves the chief of sinners, and whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

Dewi. After what manner did God bring you to this?

Synwyrol. I think I must say his ways are past finding out; but the repeated instructions of my parents, my father's pleading the covenant of God in family-duty on my behalf, and hearing the gospel of grace from time to time publicly preached, have been of great use to me. And particularly one very remarkable time of late, as our honored teacher *Yefan* was opening the covenant of grace, he mentioned that text in the 102d Psalm, *The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*

I thought I was before God indeed, and desired to be established before him for ever; and I thought my heart opened to receive him; the joy of that season I hope I shall never forget; the remembrance of it melts me, and makes me desire to wait upon the Lord in all the ways where I may expect more of it.

Dewi. I judge it certainly your duty, though young, to declare in the church what our dear Lord has done for you, that you may be admitted to the Lord's table, and wait for your Redeemer's love and presence there: don't you think so?

Synwylol. I am very weak and under many fears, yet willing you should propound me, if my parents and you think fit.

Rhinweddol. Oh! my dear child, I am greatly affected, though in measure afflicted. God shines upon my family, and I cannot say but a beam of light visits my heart at present. What my poor child converted; and seemingly got beyond her poor mother! Blessed be the God of all grace! Go on my child, go on.

Cyfiawn. Sir, I am greatly affected with what the child declared, and own the truth of God in his new covenant-promises, and the grace of God in answering poor prayers, and with pleasure I cannot express, desire she may be propounded.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, I must own this was a christian visit, and such as became a servant of Christ to make; and this was a christian family I see, where such visits were very welcome.

EPENETUS. I was going to tell you, that the servants were then called in, who were christians and church-members, and unto them some close and pertinent questions were put with regard to faith, prayer, their growth in grace, and their cheerful performance of all duty to God and man; and the whole family appeared beautiful under the yoke of their Redeemer. Whereupon *Dewi* solemnly prayed with them, and went very particularly over every case that concerned them before the Lord; and prayer being over, in the tenderest affection and love he took his leave of them, wishing the presence of their dear Redeemer might abide with them; and they, in the most thankful manner, and in the dearest love, wished him and his, and all the Israel of God, the same supporting refreshing presence.

CHRISTOPHILUS. Oh! it must be a pleasure to him to look back upon a day thus spent; but barren visits have proved very burdensome, in laughter the heart has been sorrowful, and the end of that mirth heaviness.

EPENETUS. But though this visit was over, the day was not spent; he had other visits to make, and into the house of a brother he entered, whose name was *Gobeithiol*; and after christian salutations, asked him how he did in his soul, for he seemed by his countenance to be under some trouble of mind.

Gobeithiol. Sir, so I am, and have been for some time, but it is not a trouble you are quite a stranger to; through grace Christ is precious to me, he is all my salvation, and I am helped to lean upon him as my beloved; and he is pleased not only always to support and sustain me, but at times to speak very comfortably to me, makes me glad through his work, and gives me some times of refreshment from his presence. In providence also he deals bountifully with me, and establishes the work of my hands. My wife and myself are through mercy blessed with a great measure of health; but there is a trial upon us: oh, it is a trial! my son grows more and more perverse, seems to have no sense of God or a future state upon him, despises the teacher *Edgar* and all his instructions, often turns his back upon family-worship, nor can I always get him to the public assemblies. His mother is now under many tears and concern of mind talking to him in another room: for he is but just come in from one of his foolish and sinful rambles; but all our tears and intreaties, our reproofs and corrections, are set at nought by him. I know not how, dear sir, to bear up under the trial.

Dewi. My dear brother, I heartily pity you, and earnestly desire you may be graciously supported under your trial, and mercifully surprized with a speedy and saving turn upon your son's heart. If you please we will go into the room where they are.

Upon their entrance says *Dewi*, What, sister *Mwynedd*! (for that was her name) in travail! in travail! for tears she could make no reply; but the young man, whose name was *Cyndyn*, arose to go away; but says *Dewi*, young man, you shall not go hence, I have

something to say to you, and if I can, you shall hear it.

Young man, by you the affectionate prayers of a loving father, and the repeated cries and tears of a tender mother, are despised; by you Christ the only Saviour of sinners is despised, his glorious gospel set at nought, and the blood of the everlasting covenant disregarded; by you the best instructions, and the most seasonable reproofs, and the most earnest intreaties of the best of friends have been neglected; and by you the ungodly have been chosen as your bosom companions, and their counsel and example followed. The language of all revelation is against you, the voice of all reason is against you, the secret whispers of your own conscience are against you, all the world is against you; and every good thing in the world is against you; and those you esteem your bosom friends, though they encourage your wickedness, in their own hearts judge you a fool: God's law condemns you, all the world condemns you, and you are self-condemned. While you are pursuing your pleasures, you are a stranger to the best of comforts. Now young man, let me call you to repentance; God commands all men every where to repent, he calls you to repent. Consider your ways, and think what will you do in the end thereof. Despise not your birth-right, remember the everlasting covenant, melt and mourn, in a humble manner plead the promises of it; and though you have done as wickedly as you could, yet you shall not be rejected. Think over the blessed name, in which you have been baptized, and there you may see abundant grace to the chief of sinners. Let me have an answer to all or to any part of what I have said.

Cyndyn. Sir, I am not inclined to spend any thoughts upon what you say. nor can I bear your discourse; I am your humble servant. So in a violent manner went away, and left father and mother, and *Dewi* also, in tears.

Dewi. My dear brother and sister, though this is a heavy case, it is what many of the godly, in all ages, have more or less experienced. The law you remem-

ber, and instances I shall not repeat ; advice and comfort you want. As to the former, keep close with God in all practical religion ; let not your son observe you remiss in any one duty towards God or man ; and study to be found in all your duty towards him, and leave the event to God. I understand the elders have took pains with him already, and I hope they will do so still ; and if he will not hear, the church must take public notice of it. As to the latter, your comfort lies in the covenant of God still ; though at present he causes grief, yet you can't tell for how soon, or for how late, love has fixed the time for life. Your faith is not built upon what you see, or what you don't see in him. Trust God, who hath promised, you shall never be disappointed. Though it tarry, wait for it. Please to call what family you have, and let us worship God together.

The family being come in, he asked every one of them some pertinent questions upon the great concern of the kingdom of Christ, faith and holiness ; and then prayed with them all, and was very particular in prayer for the stubborn rebellious young man, with many tears ; and for the poor grieved parents, that they might, by the Spirit of God, be greatly taught and supported under such a trying dispensation as that was ; that God would strengthen their faith in the covenant of grace, direct all their duties, and sustain their expectation that should not perish for ever.

Prayer being over, he spoke comfortably to them, wished them the fellowship of the Lord in his three glorious persons, and departed.

THEOPHILUS. Unto godly affectionate parents such trials as those are heavy beyond all expression. It is impossible they should be willing their children should perish : God does not require they should. Their faith in the covenant is thus tried, and they called to plead the promises thereof in fervent prayer ; nor are they to desist while they live. Variety of circumstances attending such trials, may doubtless call for variety of

duties ; but if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God ; still in faith, for the covenant is everlasting, and nothing shall make the faith of God of none effect.

EPENETUS. His next visit that day was to a poor brother and sister, both in years, who rejoiced greatly to see him. He asked them how they did in their souls, were they fat and flourishing in their old age? They answered, that they were but babes yet, could not find that growth they desired, and often seemed rather to decrease than increase ; but they were led to see the emptiness and imperfection of their own performances, and the suitableness and fulness of Christ more than ever, and hoped they were helped to worship him and lean upon him alone, and at times long to be with him, that they might worship him without sin, and see his glory. *Dewi* with great affection told them, that this was increasing with the increase of God ; for it was a growing up into Christ ; wished them more of it, and wished he himself had more acquaintance with it. He asked them, how they did as to outward things? They said, they had all things and did abound ; the care of Providence was precious to them ; and God in the kindness of his people, was to be adored ; and his people they humbly and heartily thanked. He went to prayer with them, and earnestly begged for them, that the God of all grace would greatly support and comfort them, give them many of his precious visits, yea make his constant abode with them, and fill them with the foretastes of an approaching rest.

Then he spoke comfortably to them, wished them the best of blessings plentifully, and said, pray accept of my love and this——. And so took his leave of them in the dearest christian affection.

CHRISTOPH. To accompany a servant of Christ through such visits as these, I should esteem a privilege ; but pray, dear **EPENETUS**, let us take a little turn with *Yefan* the teacher, through one of his visits.

EPENETUS. You remember I told you of one *Car-iadus*, who desired *Yefan* to come the first opportunity

to visit her husband *Duwiol*, who was under some trouble of mind, which she could not relate; you must observe then, that in a little time he went, and finding the good woman, asked her how her husband did, and where he was. She answered, that he was above, but to her grief very disconsolate.

Yefan. Before we call him, let me know how it is with you in your soul?

Cariadus. Through the grace of God I am helped in measure to look unto the risen Redeemer. In him I have righteousness and strength, my life is in him; in him I have a pleasant portion, and I hope in him I am complete. Though I labour under many imperfections, and sin is my burden under which I mourn, yet I trust that Christ is precious to me, and is pleased by his Spirit to refresh me. While you were last Lord's day mentioning the reason wherefore Christ is precious to a believer, I was filled with joy, and could say with the Psalmist, *In heaven I have none but thee, and upon earth I desire none besides thee.* And when you said, that Christ is all in all, I thought with comfort of the apostle's words, *All things are yours, and you are Christ's.* The distress of mind my husband labours under is a trial to me, but I hope the Comforter which our Lord promised will relieve him; and I earnestly desire your visit may by that Holy Spirit, be blessed for his refreshment.

Yefan. How is it with your husband, as to family-duty?

Cariadus. He never omits it, but I observe he goes under great discouragement to it and sometimes seems much straitened; and at other times cries and pleads, and pleads and cries, as if his heart would break; and when he gets up, often cries out, "Now I have added to my transgression; this prayer, I fear, is an abomination." And sets us all a mourning with him, and for him. Dear sir, I cannot tell you —. And my eldest poor boy, on whom I never observed any concern about religion till now, observing his father's distress,

seems himself greatly distressed, and often prays alone; and once I heard him, seemingly in a great passion of tears, say, "O Father of mercies, have mercy on my dear father in his distress, and comfort him, and convert me!"

Yefan. Ay, Father of mercies indeed, that by means of your husband's grief, leads your child to the throne of grace! What blessed fruit may you still find! To sow in tears, and to reap in joy! They who go forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. But how is it with your husband as to private prayer?

Cariadus. Oh! more than ever; and by what I can learn, often with strong cries and tears. He seems indeed to be a praying always.

Yefan. What do you think was his entrance into this distress?

Cariadus. I cannot tell you, I never observed any thing in all his conduct but what was very agreeable to our holy profession; and yet he complains bitterly of the greatness of his sins, that he is the greatest of sinners in the whole world, and has the worst heart of all men living; and wonders he is out of hell.

Yefan. If you please, call him down.—He comes.—

Duwiol. Ah, dear sir, are you come to me! It would have been my place and duty to come to you; but I neither perform duty nor know it.

Yefan. Come, dear brother *Duwiol*, how do you do? The gospel is good news still.

Duwiol. Sir, I cannot readily tell you how I am. I am under very dark apprehensions concerning myself; I wish I could give you a distinct account how it is with me. I am certain I am a very great sinner; but I am not certain how God will deal with me. But his terror makes me afraid; yet his gospel, which I own to be good news still, as you say, does by some ways and means, I can't account for, keep me from dark and horrid despair; though sometimes I think I am upon the brink of it.

Yefan. Pray dear brother, what is it that carries you to the borders of such darkness?

Duwiol. Sir, when I consider the purity of God's law, how spiritual it is, and how carnal I am; how it requires the greatest purity, not only of life and conversation, but of all the inclinations of the soul, the cogitations of the heart, and the meditations of the mind; yet how base, vile, and confused all my thoughts are; like them before the flood, every imagination of my heart evil, and that continually; my spirit sinks under the load wounded; *my sins are gone over mine head as an heavy burden, too heavy for me to bear.*

Yefan. They after the flood were not like to be better than their fathers; as the Lord himself says, Gen. viii. 21. Yet the Lord having smelled a sweet savour in the sacrifice, typical of the great sacrifice in the fulness of time offered up, he says, he would *curse the ground no more for man's sake.* You know what errand Christ came upon: suppose you are the greatest of sinners upon earth; yet *it is a true saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ came into the world to save the chief of sinners.*

Duwiol. Ay, sir, the chief indeed, if ever he saves me. But I read in his word of sins not to be pardoned, and by reason of some circumstances attending my indwelling corruptions, and my deceitful heart, I am ready to fear my sins look like such; they are so against knowledge and resolution; and if I mistake not, with too much liking and approbation.

Yefan. You can expect no other but the sinful corrupt part in any man will approve of sin and corruption; we can never be totally delivered from what approves of sin, till we are totally delivered from all sin. As for knowledge, it is what every believer sins more or less against; and as for resolution against sin, it discovers itself, though conquered and trampled under foot, to be yet from above, and therefore shall overcome at last. But as for sins unpardonable, you

know our Lord says, that *all manner of sins and blasphemies should be forgiven to the children of men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.*

Duwiol. Sir, that's it ; I am often ready, though unwilling, to conclude myself guilty of that blasphemy which is not to be pardoned ; could I but with satisfaction see myself out of the reach of that, it would be a wonderful relief unto me.

Yefan. Whatever that sin was, you must own, for our Lord positively says it, that all manner of sins but that shall be pardoned, to some or other of the children of men.

Duwiol. Yes, sir, that I must own, or deny His words who cannot lie.

Yefan. Then as our nearest way, let us in the Lord's name go in search of that sin, and consider what it was in the Jews, and see whether you can fairly be cleared on't. In Matt. xii. 24. we read, that when the pharisees heard it, they said, *This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils* This was their sin, and all manner of sin, but this should be forgiven. Now, dear brother, let me ask you ; did you ever see Jesus Christ cast out devils ! Did you ever hear all the people around him, upon such a work as that, cry out, *Is not this the Son of David ?* Did you thereupon, in envy and indignation disdain him ? Did you ever upon that, in the presence of an amazing, almost convinced company, say, that the spirit whereby Christ did cast out devils, was Beelzebub, the prince of the devils ?

Duwiol. No, sir, nothing of all, nothing of any part of this.

Yefan. Dear brother, nothing less than all this must be considered in that unpardonable blasphemy : our Lord says, that all manner of sin and blasphemy but that should be pardoned unto the children of men.

Duwiol. Then Sir, if the pharisees had not seen Christ do such works before their eyes, they could not have sinned so ?

Yefan. No, to be sure ; our Lord himself tells us so : *If I had done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin ; but now have they both seen and hated me and my Father, John xv. 24.*

Duwiol. My dear and honored teacher ; blessed be God ! there is a vast load sensibly removed from my soul ! It is an amazing comfort by faith to see my sins pardoned ! and though under clouds, it is supporting to see that they are pardonable. But what is the meaning of Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. of Heb. x. 26. of Heb. xii. 17. and of 1 John v. 16 ?

Yefan. The first calls upon us to be watchful and diligent ; for it is a possible thing for christians of the highest enjoyments and endowments to fall ; but though great christians, it is impossible they should renew themselves to repentance, flee by faith to a crucified Redeemer, and make a public example of evangelical sorrow after a godly sort. God indeed can, and will raise them up, but they are weak let them take heed and give all diligence to add to their faith virtue. The second tells the Jews, that whatever their sins were, there remained no more sacrifice, no not at Jerusalem and the temple, but fiery indignation ; which accordingly came to pass. Christ offered a perfect sacrifice, and caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease. The third tells us, that Esau could not make his father Isaac repent, and take the blessing from Jacob and give it him. And the fourth tells us, that there are sins unto temporal death : which must be the meaning of the place ; for any sin persisted in, is unto eternal death.

Duwiol. Through the mercy of God I am alive ; and have received instruction and relief. May I never forget the goodness of the Most High ! And may I, as the chief of sinners, cast all that concerns me for time and eternity, upon the all-sufficient Saviour.

Yefan. Oh, my dear brother, what has God wrought ! It is he that proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound ;

and unto you he has given beauty for ashes. I hope we shall exalt his name together. But, *Cariadus*, pray where is your young lad, which you said has of late been under some concern about his soul?

Cariadus. Sir, I will call him, he is not far off.—He comes.—

Yefan. Come *Hyddysg*, for I know your name, what are you under concern of mind about, your eternal state?

Hyddysg. I don't know, sir; I never was in my life as I am now, sir.

Yefan. How are you now?

Hyddysg. I can't tell; only I am troubled and uneasy, sir.

Yefan. What makes you troubled and uneasy?

Hyddysg. My father's great distress, sir; for I could not bear to see my father so; and I thought if he was in danger, I was in much more.

Yefan. And what did you do when you thought yourself to be in danger?

Hyddysg. I thought I must do as my father did, cry to God to save my father and me too.

Yefan. And how do you think to be saved?

Hyddysg. I don't know, sir; but I think he that can save me, knows how to save me. My parents always told me I was undone: and I think I see it is so; and they always talked of Jesus Christ the Saviour; and I desire he would save me!

Yefan. Who is Jesus Christ?

Hyddysg. I don't know, sir; only I know he is the Saviour: for I have heard you often say, and my master *Edgar*, and my parents also, that there is salvation in no other.

Cariadus. Sir, he has been a poor naughty boy; and never would regard any thing, till this distress came upon his father, and what his master and we made him learn by rote of the principles of religion, he never would incline to understand: but may his poor heart now be thoroughly bent for God!

Yefan. My dear youth, remember that you are a great sinner by nature and practice, utterly undone. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God, according to his divine nature the eternal God, but took our nature into personal union with himself; and so is God and Man in one person for ever. He died for sinners, because death was the wages of sin; but the bonds of death could not detain him, therefore he arose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, and sends his Holy Spirit down to convert and sanctify poor sinners; and to help them to pray to God and walk with him. He makes use of means to instruct the souls of men; and he can instruct the minds of children; I hope you will not, as you have done, neglect those means, but desire God to help you to make the best improvement of them.

Then others of the family were called, and to each he spoke in the Lord's name, what he thought most proper and expedient; and then in a solemn manner with them all prayed and gave thanks; and went over all the particular cases they had then been concerned in; giving praises to the Father of lights, for that special relief given to his distressed servant; so in the tenderest christian love took his leave of them all.

NEOPHYTUS. Well! what treasures christian teachers should be furnished with! that they may bring forth things new and old, to fathers, young men, and children, as the case requires. Something in this account you gave, I have picked up through mercy, for my profit. The unpardonable blasphemy, and the several texts, I have seen, to the same purpose, *opened and considered at large in MAURICE'S Faith Encouraged.* Blessed be God for his covenant of free grace! Now, how did the ruling elders visit?

EPENETUS. The teacher made several visits more that day, among some of the godly poor; strengthening their hands, and worshipping God with them. And also in one place or two he visited, where some notions inconsistent with the gospel were springing up; of which I shall not at present give the account, because perhaps

upon their obstinacy in sinful opinions, we may have occasion to mention the more public concern of the church with them hereafter. And besides, I have tired you sufficiently for this time; evening is upon us, and our families want us. My dear brethren and neighbours, the presence of Zion's King be with us all.

THE END OF THE FIFTH DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE VI.

Account of the Ruling Elder's Visits. They had no fixed days ; always ready to receive such as came on the concern of Christ's Kingdom. One of them visits Diwall, reproves him for his Worldly-mindedness, and neglect of Family-Prayer, &c. He exhorts him to his Duty, prays with him, and takes his Leave. Another Elder visits other families ; reproves a Servant of Eye-Service, and making too free with her Master's Goods : She is convinced, humbled, and returns him thanks. Whatever belonged to the Walk and Conversation of the People fell directly under the Care and Inspection of the Ruling Elders ; who reproved, exhorted, comforted, and prayed with and for the visited Persons, as the Case required. The Deacons speedily and cheerfully distributed what was charitably collected, among the Poor of their respective Divisions ; visited, comforted them, and worshipped God with them. Instances of private offences, and the Offenders recovered by private Admonitions. Instances of Offences, as to Covetousness, Injustice, and oppression of the Poor ; the Offenders not reclaimed by private Reproofs, they are brought before the Church ; the Manner of the Church's proceeding in public Admonitions ; some Offenders humbled and restored, and others cut off.

PHILALETHES.

NEIGHBOURS and brethren, I am glad to see you all so well and cheerful, and the time so well observed ; in the same minute we all meet here, under the delightful tree, which in part grew for our sake, that in the shade thereof our conversation might be attended with

the greater pleasure: but our NEOPHYTUS, such is his zeal, he got the start of us, and I am afraid thought us long.

NEOPHYTUS. I have not been here many minutes before you, but am glad you are all come. Of a question of mine, mentioned at the close of the last opportunity no notice was took, but I am so well acquainted with your condescending friendship, that I am not so much as tempted to think it was disdained, so I was resolved to be here time enough, that I might repeat it before any thing else offers, and with submission expect an answer thereto. Pray, dear EPENETUS, how did the ruling elders visit?

EPENETUS. They had not their fixed days to receive visits, as the preaching elders had, but every day to them was alike: if they were not found at home one day, the persons who sought them might come another, or leave a request that they would please to visit them. The doors were always open for any that came upon the concern of Christ's Kingdom. Many, under the first work of God upon their hearts, did chuse to use freedom with them, and by them led to be free with the preaching elders; complaints and grievances were generally brought to them; and very often by their endeavours so removed, that the preaching elders never heard of them. *Dydwyll*, being a person in years, was generally at home, and at leisure to receive any christian visits, prudent and wise, capable of giving the best advice. As for *Diwyd* and *Dyfal* there was no end of their labour abroad, from family to family, from person to person, diligently discharging their trust and duty. *Gruffudd* being a person of strong faith, was of great use to them all under some discouraging trials which did attend them: and they were all men of prayer, and capable of giving a good account of any case in practical religion; who, though they did not tie themselves down to a strict method, yet often worshipped God with their fellow-members they went to visit, or whose visits they received: and had their proper

times of communicating to each other their common concern ; which generally was done with prayer.

NEOPHYTUS. The cases wherein they were concerned were doubtless very many, and those attended with many different occurrences and circumstances ; but I should be very thankful if you would please to favor us with an instance or two of their work and way.

EPENETUS. You must observe then, that *Dyfal* one day in his visits entered the house of one *Diwall*, a person thought to be too *negligent* in several religious duties, but received the elder very kindly, as did also the family. After a very little time in common discourse, says the elder *Dyfal*,

Come brother *Diwall*, let us redeem our time unto some religious purpose, and see how the work of God flourishes ; you have been planted in the house of the Lord now some time, and how do you flourish in his courts ?

Diwall. I hope well ; I know more than I did, and have good words come to me, and have good thoughts upon them ; so I hope I flourish. I love to hear both our bishops, at all times ; and I was greatly pleased of late, to hear our pastor say, that he who did not provide for his own family had denied the faith, and was worse than an infidel ; and indeed I think so too.

Elder. It is a certain truth, that persons careless of their families are great strangers to the work of faith and the labour of love : and generally speaking, persons who neglect the duties of their particular callings as men, do, notwithstanding their much talk about religion, live in the neglect of the duties of their calling as christians. Those who are slothful in business, are never truly fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. But there are two sorts of duties persons owe to their families ; each very necessary, and in their proper place very beautiful.

Diwall. Yes, sir, like enough ; and I hope I know, and am found in both, as I have time, and as the case requires.

Elder. I mean a wise, moderate, well-tempered care to provide the necessities of life for them, and that in such a way and manner, as may convince them that this world is not our portion; and then a holy, diligent, and zealous attendance upon the duties of religion with them, and towards them; and that in such a way and manner as may convince them that we seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness in the first and principal place. He that does not do thus, does not provide for his own family.

Diwall. True, I often tell them so; that religion is the principal thing, and that they must die ere long and leave this world.

Elder. But upon this you know I should use freedom with you; Zion's King makes it my duty, and therefore in his name let me ask you; Do you constantly and orderly worship God in and with your family? Do you instruct your children and servants? Do you put them upon their proper duties to God; and allow them time convenient?

Diwall. Sir, I think I do as well as I can; all people can't do alike; and I can't always do as I would; but my wife knows I endeavour to discharge all my duty.

Elder. Sister *Issel* (for that was her name) how is it with you in your soul, and how prospers religion in your family?

Issel. I am but very low from day to day, like a silly dove without a heart; and am often discouraged, but through mercy, not left; for at times I am refreshed in hearing the gospel preached, and the public worship of God is made precious to me; though by some means or other, my comfort is like the morning cloud, and my religious resolutions are too much like the early dew. And as to religion in our family, my soul desires to see more of it. I am afraid our house is not so with God as it ought to be.

Diwall. Why, wife you know I pray in the family, and often read; and speak of good things too, as well as I can.

Issel. We don't always pray, and when we do, it is seldom in a seasonable hour, and I am afraid never in such a savoury spirit, and evangelical fear, as becomes the duty: as I have before now told you weeping; but I find so much deceit and backwardness in my heart, that my mouth is stopped.

Elder. Ah, brother *Diwall*! I am sorry to hear this account. The God of the families of Israel have mercy on you, and on your poor family also. What, not pray always! and when you do, yet seldom in a seasonable hour!

Diwall. Why, sir, business calls me out, may be in a morning, and perhaps I am not within till afternoon; and then sometimes business keeps me out late; and you know that must be minded.

Elder. Ah brother! if your heart was thoroughly bent for prayer, you would follow the apostle's rule; *Watching thereunto with all perseverance.* When you are called out betimes, you would get your family together betimes; and when you are out, you would make all the haste home, that as seasonably as possible you might worship God with them: and think their times of worship should be as punctually kept as their meal times. But how do you do at meals, God should in a holy manner be worshipped before we eat, and when we have done and are refreshed: is that part of duty regularly kept up?

Diwall. Yes, sir, when I am with them; but I am not always present, and often when I am at home we don't eat together.

Elder. Pray sister *Issel* how is it with you as to that God glorifying, soul-instructing duty, when your husband is not with you?

Issel. Truly, very indifferent; I am but a poor woman, and generally low in my soul; and I often tell my son *Anianol* he should own God in the food and refreshment we have, but he never does.

Elder. Hark ye, *Anianol*, Don't you think it is your duty to crave a blessing on your food, and return

thanks when you are refreshed? You are not a child, you have often heard your duty in public sermons; and I know your master *Edgar*, when you were with him, gave you the best instructions; I hope you are convinced it is the Lord that gives you your daily bread, and can make your table a blessing.

Anianol. I don't know sir.

Elder. No! Did you not hear our honored pastor last Lord's-day say, that every thing is sanctified to us by the word of God and prayer, therefore we should pray to God for a blessing on our food, lest our table become a snare to us?

Anianol. I was not there.

Elder. Seeing I can ask you with your parents' leave, and if without I should even think it my duty, pray where were you?

Anianol. Taking a harmless walk with a few acquaintance in the fields, sir.

Elder. And can you say it is a harmless thing to neglect the worship of God, and profane the Lord's-day?

Anianol. Sir, there are great numbers that take that liberty, and we were a considerable company, but I know of no harm that we did.

Elder. Can you think that sin is no harm?

Anianol. Sir, people cannot kill nor steal and be harmless; but we did neither, so I think we sinned not.

Elder. Pray, young man, tell me what is sin?

Anianol. To do such wickedness; but I hope I never did it, nor never shall.

Elder. Then you'll never want a Saviour to save you from sin?

Anianol. I am no greater sinner than others, as I know of, and I shall fare as they do.

Elder. Our preaching elders have had talk with you, do you remember any thing they said?

Anianol. They said I was a sinner, and undone without a Saviour, but I cannot see much into it.

Elder. How can you tell then, but the blindness of your mind may be your sin and misery also?

Anianol. I don't know for that.

Elder. Then poor youth let me tell you it is so. Sin has brought that blindness upon you, and by sin you run yourself more and more into darkness. It is a very awful account the scripture gives us of persons in your case : *Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.* I do also, *Anianol*, tell you, that you are a sinner by nature, and by practice ; and that there is salvation in none but Christ, and that all he saves he converts and sanctifies ; and in his ordinary methods makes use of the ministry of the word for the conversion of the soul ; and therefore, as an elder in the church of Christ that has care over you, I do reprove you for your profaning the Lord's-day, omitting your proper duty while you partake of Heaven's bounty, and call you to consider your ways and repent. Despise not your birthright as profane Esau did ; remember the covenant of God, and the precious contents thereof ; admire the grace of God therein, that he should give forth so many encouraging promises to the children of his people ; and think how dreadfully aggravated your sins must be, in trampling under foot so valuable a treasure : and how great must be your folly in regarding lying vanities, and forsaking your own mercy. If in such methods you persist, the church must take notice of your case ; and as a church, call you to repentance ; which, if you despise, may be the last means God will please to use with you while you live. Therefore, in the bowels of the beloved Redeemer, who came to seek and to save that which was lost, I again call upon you to repent.

Then, speaking to the maid-servant, he said, Come, *Prudd* (for that was her name) how is it with you in your soul ? how is it with you in your place and service ? I hope the yoke of Christ in his evangelical institutions, and in his providential dispensations, is easy to you.

Prudd. I hope I am thankful I have a name in his house and within his walls ; and I am glad it is an

everlasting one, that shall not be cut off; though it is not always alike with me as to sensible enjoyments of the Redeemer's presence, yet I am helped to believe he is always with me according to his word; and I earnestly beg, I may always live and walk as a person that believes it. As to the dispensations of providence, I know my Lord does nothing amiss; and that my condition is the best for me. He says, *Art thou called being a servant? care not for it.* I desire I may, wherein I am called, there walk with God. I thank you for taking notice of me, and beg your prayers.

Elder. I must take the liberty to speak a word to your apprentice. Come, *Moesol*, you are the child of godly parents, how is it with you as to the great concern of religion?

Moesol. I cannot tell you, sir; many thoughts pass through my heart, but they don't take much hold of me, nor I of them.

Elder. But are you not under trouble of mind that you are so confused, and at those uncertainties; seeing God says, *My son, give me thy heart?*

Moesol. I think sometimes I am, but that trouble passes away like all the rest. My parents used to tell me, that I should seek first the kingdom of God, but things appear to me now as if I was to make this world my principal concern; for I am to learn of my master, sir, and do as he bids me.

Elder. But I hope your master bids you, at proper times, read and pray, worships God with you, and instructs you in the principles of the christian religion.

Moesol. Sir, my master is present and can tell you what he does; but as for proper times, I don't know when nor where to find them: for I am up always very early and late, and I think I am hard tasked, and if I am inclined to read a little before I go to bed. I am allowed no candle; every Lord's-day indeed I call at my father's, and there I am made to read a chapter or two.

Diwall. Sir, in keeping him close to work I do but

my duty, and he is like to be the better for it; I never knew work hurt any body; idleness tends to nothing but ruin; as for candle, I think to allow him one late in the night is needless, wasteful, and dangerous; I bid him be a good boy, and serve God, which he may do without a candle.

Elder. Ah! my friend, things are not with you as they seemed to promise once; your very expressions discover a distance from the chiefest good. In your family you do not keep up the worship of God as you ought; your wife, though she does not tell me so, I know is much grieved; and your son I see is awfully hardened, and appears a great stranger to the principles of the oracles of God: your poor servant seems to be a slave; you seem to make him serve with rigour. Poor fellow, he is willing to serve you; nor is he averse to the service of God; but as you seem to deal with him, God must have no part of his time. Be it known to you, that your master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him, and though your servant does not want food, yet seeing you allow him no time for God's worship, nor teach him therein, nor urge him thereto, you do not give unto him what is just and equal. I charge him here before you, to serve you in singleness of heart, fearing God; and I charge you here before him, and the rest of your family; to continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving; instruct your family, put them upon every thing that pertains to the fear of God, and give them convenient time for it; and inquire how they do. You will take all this well I hope at my hands, it is but a part of my duty which I owe to the Lord and to you, I wish I could perform better, and with a greater prospect of success; but I hope the Lord will help me to remember you all before the throne of grace; and may you be helped to pray for me, who am so insufficient for my work, and often so discouraged in it.

Diwall. I hope, sir, you'll go to prayer with us, now you are here, and I take your visit, freedom and faith-

fulness, as a kindness ; I wish we may receive advantage thereby,

Elder. I thank you for accepting my service, and for calling me to seek God with and for you. Upon this he went through a very affectionate prayer, and mentioned every particular case with great enlargement and many tears. And when he had done, he gave the best advice to each in particular ; and cautioned *Di-wall* against excessive love to the things of this world, and in tender love and concern took his leave of them all.

NEOPHYTUS. What an encouraging mercy it must be to pastors and teachers, to have such elders to assist them ! While they are giving attendance to reading, exhortation, and doctrine ; studying to divide the word of truth aright, they may be satisfied that another part of the work of Christ's kingdom suffers not, but is attended to by able and faithful helpers of Christ's appointment !

THEOPHILUS. Right ! it must deliver them from much uneasiness of heart and anxiety of mind, to know that the flock of God is under the care and inspection of faithful watchmen, while they are furnishing themselves from the scriptures of truth, with well-digested and evangelically prepared messages, from the Prince of shepherds, for their spiritual refreshment in their public assemblies. They may then, as the apostle says, with abundant pleasure and satisfaction, meditate on the blessed truths they are to carry to others, and give themselves wholly to them.

PHILAL. And I am thinking, what a comfort it must be to a poor church, to see itself under the care of so many faithful overseers. To think that they should be so regarded and watched over, for the honor of Christ and their own spiritual advantage. It is a peculiar promised privilege ; *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night, Isaiah lxii. 6. For there shall be a day, that the watchmen upon the mount Ephraim shall*

cry, Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion unto the Lord our God! Jer. xxxi. 6.

CHRISTOPH. Then I must say, What reason have we to bless the name of our dear Redeemer, who giveth gifts unto men; that he should signify his care in such a manner towards his dear churches, appoint them such officers, make willing, qualify, and enable his servants, for the discharge of their work and duty. Oh the love of Christ in giving pastors after his own heart.

SYLLOGISTICUS. And I will take leave to observe then, how reasonable it is the churches should, in humble and earnest prayer, look unto Christ for them; bless him, and be very thankful in the enjoyment of them; and see that they do, in a gospel spirit, submit themselves unto them!

NEOPHYTUS. But in this visit of the ruling elder we discovered a stubborn ignorant young man, and his father too negligent in the concerns of the kingdom of Christ; and as to this world, had I been in the elder's place, I could not have cleared him of covetousness and cruelty: what, was there no more notice took of father and son?

EPENETUS. Upon their persisting in their sinful ways, you may in the course of this story, hear of some more public concern the church had with them both: but what I mentioned, you see, was only the visit of a ruling elder.

And, *Dyfal* the elder, being for that afternoon at leisure, he visited some more families before he returned home: for the ruling elders some days had more time before them, and sometimes had less: as I said afore they observed no certain fixed rule, but that of expediency, as the case required and the time allowed: But I said he was at liberty that afternoon, and turning in to a brother's house, whose name was *Ysprydol*, found him and his family well, drawing on in their duty with delight. Much pleasant talk he had with them upon the meaning of some divine texts, and upon each other's late experimental acquaintance with their

dear Redeemer's love and friendship: but before he went to prayer with them, says *Ysprydol*, sir, if you please patiently to hear a small concern that lies between us and our servant here present. She is godly we doubt not, has been, you know, a member with us for some time, with great affection speaks of Christ, and with great zeal and delight attends family-worship, speaks well to the poor children, and I believe really is of use to them; and in all the ways of her duty I would give her all encouragement: but there are some things which in some measure grieve me, nor can I prevail upon her to reform them; if I could, you should not have heard of them. She does not do our service in our absence, as if we were present, and makes some of her acquaintance too welcome with the best things in our house, she can come at, without our leave.

Dyfal the elder says to her, *Hawddgar* (for that was her name) I am sorry there should be any uneasiness in any christian family, and it will be to the honor of those who have any hand therein immediately to reform: here are two things laid to your charge; pray, how do you improve your time when your master and mistress are absent?

Hawddgar. Not vainly, sir, I should be under a great deal of guilt if I did; but you know I am bound to redeem all the time I can for reading and prayer, and I cannot so well do it when they are in the way.

Elder. What, is your place very hard, and do they allow you no time for religious duties?

Hawddgar. I cannot say that my place is hard; and I must own that I have opportunities for some religious performances; for I am neither up very early nor late; to do my place justice, that is not required of me; but still I want more time than I have; and I think no time so proper as when I am most alone.

Elder. And what if God should say to you, *Who hath required this at your hands?* You grant, you are not without convenient opportunities for private wor-

ship, a privilege some would be glad of; but you say you would have more time: but you have sold your time unto your master and mistress, and they pay you for it and can you imagine that God calls you to do them injustice? Is it possible that your conscience should not tell you, at those seasons you say you improve for religious ends, “Now I am doing what I should not do; I am doing as I would not be done by; I am defrauding my master and mistress of their time, and they must pay for what I use for myself?” You doubtless remember the rule, *servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart; as unto Christ: not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good-will doing service as to the Lord and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.* Eph. vi. 5—8. You see it is not the Lord’s will you should do as you have done; you may expect more of his presence in a diligent improvement of your time in your proper service. But you also take unjust freedom with things that are not your own; pray, what do you say to that?

Hawddgar. Why, sir, I live with a brother in christianity, and thought I could be more free there, than if I lived with heathen men who would reproach religion for it; and then if I gave some of the best things, it was but to entertain some dear religious persons, unto whom sure my master and mistress do owe love and respect, as well as I myself.

Elder. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service, 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Then as to your master’s victuals or drink, you have right to nothing but your necessary food; nor should you give any thing away

without order or leave. *Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things: not answering again. Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.* Purloining is a giving away without their leave their victuals or drink, or any thing that is theirs. So you may plainly see, that your practice is condemned by the written word of God. And as for those who come to see you, when they think you are alone, under pretence of christian conversation to be entertained, they are no better than plunderers, and give too evident indications that their god is their belly. Wherefore I do in the name of Christ reprove you for your sin; and when you see those dear religious persons again, pray reprove them for their sin, in tempting you to do as you have done; or at least in receiving from you what they should not have received; I call you to repentance, and desire you would shew it.

Hawddgar. Sir, I did not think it had been thus; but what you say lays me under conviction, I am sorry at my heart I have acted so; I have done my master and mistress wrong; and how to make them amends I cannot tell: I desire God would keep me from all appearance of such evils any more.

Ysprydol. That's amends enough to us, *Hawddgar*, we desire no other; and I do assure you, that whatever time we can spare any day for the edification of your soul, it shall upon your request be granted you; and if a christian friend comes to see you, and stands in need as you may think of any refreshment, upon your request it shall be granted.

Hawddgar. Sir, I am ashamed of myself, and for your christian tenderness I return thanks; and so I do thankfully own the kindness and faithfulness of our honored elder, in taking this trouble with me, and humbly beg his prayers and yours. And upon this he prayed with and for them all; and blessed God for his unspeakable gift; and then in tender christian love took his leave of them. Then he visited one poor

christian family or two, strengthened their hands in God, and returned to his own house.

NEOPHYTUS. How great, how glorious, the purity, the equity, and the spirituality of the christian religion! What a mercy it is to be acquainted with the beauties of holiness! Our God is glorious in holiness; and where the children of men do not appear cloathed with holiness, let them talk until their tongues are tired, we must say *Ichabod*, where is the glory? But pray, dear EPHENETUS, will you please to give us an instance upon each of the ruling elders discharging their duty in christian visits? and will it be agreeable to give us some short account of the deacons, in any part of their work towards the poor?

EPHENETUS. Whatever belonged unto the walk and conversation of the people, fell directly under the care and inspection of the ruling elders. The omission of duties of any kind, the violation of any divine precepts or prohibitions, searched out by them, or reported to them, they in all faithfulness reprov'd; and the weak and the weary they strengthened, and the young and the feeble they encouraged; all the flock, and the lambs in the flock, they watched over to the utmost of their ability; and greatly encouraged each other in their work: and under the blessing of heaven their endeavours were so guided and prospered, for repentance, peace, and the continuance of love, that *Dewi* and *Yefan*, the pastor and teacher, knew very little of what might be disagreeable and discouraging to them: nor were there many offenders, though there were some, of which perhaps you may have some account, dealt with in the public assemblies of the church. But as it is impossible to go over the whole of their work, so I think it is not needful to instance in the visits of the other elders, which ruled and visited as this did, spoke in reproof, exhortation, or comfort, and prayed with and for the visited persons frequently as the case required. But as for the deacons, if my neighbours desire it, I shall be willing to give a short account of them.

THEOPHILUS. By all means, dear **EPENETUS**.

EPENETUS. The charitable collections of the church and assembly being made, and the distributions thereof to the several poor fixed, by the common consent of elders and deacons, as they thought most requisite, the deacons always took away with them what was allowed their respective divisions, and to every particular person, with speed and cheerfulness delivered his part.

NEOPHYTUS. Divisions! I thought they were all of them deacons unto the whole church?

EPENETUS. So they were; but for expediency, each deacon had under his more special care the poor which did lie most convenient for him; though in the absence or indisposition of one deacon, the other who did lie next him, supplied his place; but those divisions were only discretionary ones among themselves, and might be altered by them at pleasure.

NEOPHYTUS. I humbly beg that you and this company would excuse my impertinence.

THEOPHILUS. Nay, if one may speak for the rest, we are all greatly obliged to you, my dear **NEOPHYTUS**, for your usefulness! It is owing to your kind assistance, that in the course of our conference, a great many profitable things have been introduced.

NEOPHYTUS. Gently again, **THEOPHILUS**! in what light must I take this? Is it a sarcasm, or an excess of candour? But we hinder the story.

EPENETUS. One day *Tirion*, who was one of the deacons, as I told you afore, went to visit some of the poor, and took with him their respective portions; and entering the mean habitation of one *Gwastad*, a very poor man, yet very constant under his Redeemer's yoke; says the deacon to him, brother, how do you do? and how does your aged yoke-fellow do?

Gwastad. Ah brother *Tirion*, what are you come to visit us! What kindness is this in God and man! We are, through mercy, as well as can be expected under our prevailing infirmities: our houses of clay decay apace.

Deacon. How is it with you in the immortal part that can't decay? for the house of clay, though fearfully and wonderfully made, is but a tabernacle for the more noble spirit to dwell in for a season.

Gwastad. Truly it is to us as if both decayed: our memory fail us much; and though we were never very ready at taking in the blessed doctrine, as distinctly delivered by our honored teachers, yet we decay in capacity, and can neither receive nor retain as heretofore.

Deacon. When the most skilful hand falls to work with broken, worn out, and decayed instruments, his work will not appear much to his praise. The immortal spirit that cannot decay in man, making use of feeble decayed organs, must appear as if decayed too; but an amazing mercy it is that our tender Redeemer will not suffer our faith to fail, though the acts thereof, under clouds and temptations, may be disturbed and interrupted!

Gwastad. Ay, a mercy indeed; Christ is the Author and the Finisher of faith; and though sometimes I have thought my faith grew weaker, because sensible enjoyments seemed to withdraw, yet I am taught to know, that faith's great concern is with Christ, who *is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* And this is very precious to us both, and of it we converse with pleasure under sensible decays.

Deacon. Then I hope you are very comfortable in your souls.

Gwastad. Through grace we are sedately cheerful, and at times exceeding joyful; and my poor wife is favoured with more of the foretastes of heaven than I am! T'other day, all on a sudden, she cries out, *I see him! I see him!* Says I, Who do you see? She replied, *The King, the King in his beauty! he is crowned with glory and honor! Oh I long to be with him!* Come my wife, can you tell our dear friend here how it was with you then?

Siriol; (for that was her name) answer'd, No truly,

husband, that I can't: though it is not gone from me, like that great king's dream, what was his name? for through mercy I remember it, and something of the savour of it remains in my soul, but as I can't work myself up into such a sensible enjoyment of my Redeemer's presence, so I can't put into words what I felt then; and I think it was something greater than any words. But though I am not as then in the mount, yet I can say, through grace, that Jesus Christ is very precious to me. He is my wisdom, he is my righteousness, he is my strength, he is my worthiness, he is my portion, he is my heaven, he is my all. Oh! *the lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage.* I have all things and abound; blessed be the Lord, blessed be the Lord for ever!

Deacon. The church and elders give their love to you, and this——

Gwastad. What constant reason have we to admire the care of our Redeemer! That he should put into the hearts of his dear servants to send to us before we want! How great is his goodness which he lays up for us! What great things has he laid up and laid out for both worlds! We admire his covenant, care and love, in your tenderness and kindness towards us; are thankful to the church and elders for their bounty, and are thankful to the Lord for honoring them with a capacity and inclination for such service; and that poor unworthy *we* should be regarded.

Deacon. I hope I am thankful to the Lord that I find you rich in faith and the comforts thereof; God deals bountifully with you, indeed it refreshes my spirit, I carry more away with me than I brought; and wish your joy may more and more abound; the presence of the Lord be with you.

Gwastad. Nay; dear brother, if your time will permit, I humbly beg you would spend some time in prayer with us before you depart.—Upon this he worshipped God with them, blessed God for his unspeakable gift unto them, committed them and all the Israel

of God to never-failing compassions; and in the tenderest love took his leave.

CHRISTOPH. Well, I see 'tis possible a person may be very poor and yet very happy! What a palace was this! What royal inhabitants! Here the King of glory made his abode! Here was the best furniture; here the brightest robes; here the greatest beauty; here the most delicious refreshments, *wine upon the lees well refined, and fat things full of marrow!* The communion of the blessed Redeemer; heaven in themselves; abundantly satisfied in their portion; for indeed they had all; rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. 'Tis impossible to take an inventory of what such do enjoy. But pray EPHENETUS proceed; I hope you have not done with the deacon yet.

EPHENETUS. No; he called upon another poor family, entered the house, and asked them how they did? The man of the house answered, whose name was

Galarus, I thank you, we are but sorrowful, yet I must own it is a mercy it is no worse with us: I am under pains of body that much affect my mind; my wife always feeble and much indisposed; and our child here with us, though grown into years, yet, by reason of weakness, not able to get his bread; we are poor and afflicted.

Deacon. Well, dear brother, that's what the Lord promises in one place; *I will leave in the midst of thee a poor and afflicted people, and in the name of the Lord shall they trust.* To be rich in faith is to be rich indeed! I am just come from brother *Gwastad* and his wife, and they are as poor as you can be, yet are as merry as birds of day. Come, you have the same reason, through grace to triumph; your portion is great, and the afflictions of your present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you.

Galarus. That is some support indeed, that we have some good hope that our afflictions are not al-

ways to last; but I think God gives us leave to groan under them while they are upon us.

Deacon. True, he would have us be sensible of his hand, and of our trials, but 'tis a very easy thing to exceed in groans and complaints. There are two extremes to be avoided, the one is to despise the chastenings of the Lord, and the other is to faint when rebuked of him: I hope the Lord will bear you up in the midst of the path of judgment.

Galarus. When we think of some years past, and of a capacity of service in measure we then enjoyed, and take a view of our present circumstances, our hearts sink, and we wonder wherefore we are continued in this world?

Deacon. Ah! dear brother, you greatly mistake things; the time past of your life, was not the most honorable part of it. Indeed in some sense you might then appear in greater activity and vigour, in the service and work of the kingdom, than you can at present; but now you are called to suffer the will of your glorious Lord, and to magnify his name in the exercise of patience: that patience might have its perfect work, that you might be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. This is the most glorious part of your life, only see that you go through it honorably. The Lord calls afflictions to pass over you both, and commands us to speak comfortably to you under your trials, and see that you want for nothing. Christ is your Lord, and we are your servants, and I hope he will help us to be found in our duty.

Galarus. Dost hear, wife? I did not think we had any honor belonging to us, but our kind brother here says, we are raised to I don't know what dignity, and have I don't know how many servants: dost think so, wife?

Trist, (for that was her name) answered, really I don't know; there are many mysteries belonging to the christian religion, and perhaps this is one of them. I often thought that if we suffered the will of the Lord

aright, we should not be destitute of comfort. A person in suffering God's will, honors him; and I remember he says, *They that honor me I will honor*. For my part, I wish I could get over my sorrow and sing; for I hope I am an inhabitant of the rock still. I hope I am very willing to be poor, and am in measure made to admire the care of God, and the kindness of his people towards us in our poverty; but the weakness of my child grieves me more than any thing.

Deacon. Christ said to one of his disciples, *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*. There are many things in providence, that the most penetrating mind upon earth cannot unfold; but there is one truth very plain, if you and I can but believe it, and whether we receive it or no, it is an everlasting truth, that whatever God does is the very best thing to be done. It is best you should be as you are, and it is best your son should be as he is: every thing worketh for good. You are in the everlasting covenant, for your son is so; and the affliction is a new-covenant blessing. It would be a greater grief to you to see him abusing a state of health and strength among the frothy and the profane; by this means I am fully persuaded the Lord does his soul good. Don't you hope so yourself, young man?

Cystuddiol answered, (for so he was called) truly, sir, I am not without hope about it. The eternal God is without doubt infinitely wise and good; I wish I knew more of him and of his salvation! I know I am a poor sinner, and that there is no way to heaven and glory but Christ; these things I think over a little, and who knows how it would have been with me, as you said, if I had alway enjoyed health and strength. I hope I am willing to leave all with him who is from above, and is above all; as the honored teacher advised me when he was here last.

Deacon Well said, my dear young man; Christ and any condition; I must say it again, Christ and any condition. Come, brother *Galarus*, you see the tender

Redeemer regards you all : how can you be unhappy ? He has given you himself and how can you be poor ? Don't dwell too much on things of sense ; God has given you the eye of faith, that enters into heaven, and can view the glories within the veil ! Make use of it constantly ; and my heart's desire is, that the eternal spirit of faith would always carry you in his tender arms. The church and elders ordered their love to be remembered to you, and this —. And pray make your wants known, and tell me how 'tis with you ?

Galarus. I bless God, and thank the church, elders, and yourself ; your care is constant and your kindness great : I can't say that we are in wants, but all that you communicate refreshes us many ways ; for there is the kindness of God and the godly. My constant desires are, that all grace may abound to the whole church of God.

Deacon. Come ; at present hurry of business calls me not, I have a little time before me, let us worship God together

Trist. Oh ! I thank you, dear sir, I remember last time you were here, you staid a very little while, and could not stay to go to prayer.

Upon this, he worshipped God with them, in a very particular manner prayed over their trials and wants, begged all supplies of rich grace and comforts to them from above, and blessed the Lord it was so well with them as it was ; and then in christian tenderness took his leave of them : visited one place more much unto the same purpose, and in the same manner with what I have already mentioned ; and so returned to his habitation.

THEOPHILUS. I return you many thanks, dear *EPENETUS*, for complying so readily with my request, and giving so distinct a relation of social religion, in the visits received or made by the officers of the church. By this we may see what a great part of their work was, and after what manner they went through it, in other cases, which in great variety might occur. Some

things I see they met with, which might in a measure distress their minds, but you told us that, perhaps, they might be considered after a more public manner; so I see that what we have been upon is a fair introduction unto some account of their public trials and afflictions; which I hope now, in what order you think most convenient, you'll please to favor us with.

NEOPHYTUS. But with submission I may suppose that they had trials among them which never came under a public consideration, but between brother and brother, or a brother and two or three, and so happy end put to them: pray, if EPENETUS pleases, and with the good leave of the company, may I not in the first place desire a brief account of them?

THEOPH. Did not I tell you, my NEOPHYTUS, that your usefulness was great in this conference; for many profitable things would have escaped us else?

NEOPHYTUS. Or introduced in a more orderly manner, and to more advantage, most excellent THEOPHILUS.

EPENETUS. I shall then in the first place gratify my young friend, which I am persuaded will not be ungrateful to the company: upon a time, in some discourse which *Egwan* (of whom you have heard something before) and one *Hyderus* had, wherein they seemed to be of different sentiments, the latter told the former that he was an insignificant fellow, whose thoughts were not to be regarded. *Egwan* said in answer, that he took it very ill of him: the other replied, You may take it as you please: so their conversation ended in a cloud. But *Egwan* had but little rest that night. Is it so then, says he to himself, and yet did Christ redeem me? Did the Spirit of the Lord visit my heart? Did the church of Christ receive me, and must I, though I am weak and feeble, be called insignificant? Tossed and tumbled through the night under much uneasiness, thinking that in the morning he would go to one of the elders and complain: he got up, and, as was always his way, committed himself in

the first place to God; and while he was at prayer, mourning over his present uneasiness, that word came into his mind, *if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.* He quickly saw that it was not his immediate business to divulge it to any body, no not to an elder, but go directly to the brother who gave him the offence; accordingly he desired God to give him meekness of wisdom from above, and bless his design; and after some time he went, found *Hyderus*, and spoke to him as follows:

Egwan. Brother, I have had a very uneasy night; you spoke I think very unadvisedly with your lips, to say no worse on't, you have grieved me much, and I think you have sinned against God. I have judged it my duty to come and have some talk with you about it; I have mentioned it to none but the Lord: you know in derision and disdain you called me an insignificant fellow. Pray what do you think of the expression, and of the spirit you appeared in when 'twas spoke?

Hyderus. Indeed I think it was not worth your while to come to me about it. And though I charge you not with pride, yet pray does it not look very much that way, that you should make it your business to come hither to prove yourself valuable and significant?

Egwan. I came with no such design; I hope I am sensible that I am a poor unworthy person, and to my grief of very little use in the church of Christ; but to tell you that I am grieved; for if I am such a person as with disdain you described me, then am I not regarded by the Redeemer of sinners, I have no portion in him, nor does his Spirit dwell in me, nor has he ever took notice of my heart, otherwise, sure, I should be entitled to a place in the esteem of his children. Why did the church of Christ receive me? I think you have censured the whole church and its elders in a like manner with myself. Worse words I could have bore

from heathen men, but to be disdained and derided by you, a brother, goes very near me.

Hyderus. I don't pretend to justify what I said, but I think you greatly aggravate it, whereas you might as well have been easy without taking any notice of it.

Egwan. And suffer the sin to lie upon you, and so bring a sin also upon myself. Brother, it is nothing but repentance for sinning against God that I desire; I am willing, I hope, to think meanly of myself, but I think I should not be willing to see any thing that belongs to the kingdom of our dear Redeemer disdained.

Hyderus. Dear brother, I disdain you not, you discover yourself to be a christian of good improvement. I am sorry I so sinned against God and you, and desire that brotherly love and tender respect may continue.

Egwan. Amen. I am satisfied, dear brother.

CHRISTOPH. What a speedy happy end was put to this offence! Oh, what endless strife of tongues, evil surmizings, animosities, and popular clamour, spring, prevail, and spread in some places, for want of observing such a method as this! What wise and righteous rules has our dear Redeemer given his churches! Where they are punctually observed, holiness, peace, and love must flourish.

THEOPH. And where they are not observed, there must be much confusion and disorder; and unto the poor elders, who watch over such a people, there must be distress enough!

PHILAL, I happened to be of late in a certain place, where there was a person greatly blamed for acquainting the elders immediately with what he apprehended sinful in another; who, as every body judged that saw him, was overtaken in liquor, and seen of many he was, and the case was undeniably plain: but notwithstanding he insisted upon it, that the person who informed, as he called it, against him, was a greater transgressor than he, because he did not observe this rule, to deal with him privately first; and there were several of his mind.

THEOPH. I hope none of the elders were! Lovers of strong liquors will always endeavour to extenuate the crime and guilt. But vain man as he was, what had he to do with that rule! He who gave offence to all the world, so far as he was known, must have nothing said to him but in a private way! Ah, dear **PHILALETHES**, by what I can learn from abroad, such persons are the very canker-worms and caterpillars of the christian profession; and when they see a green plant destroyed by such vermin, let them consider what awful work themselves are concerned in. I greatly desire the churches may be delivered from such devourers. And as for dealing with them as offenders, I am pretty certain it is impossible it should be too public: he who in the face of the sun prefers his bottle, and despises the blessed fellowship of the Redeemer, notwithstanding his prating about religion; he who defrauds his family of what is justly their due, and perhaps others also; he who destroys a constitution made for better service; he who hardens his heart, and sinfully wastes his precious time in gratifying a vitiated appetite, and in noise, bluster, and nonsense, which should be employed in the service and worship of the Lord, or in a conscientious discharge of the duties of his particular calling, cannot be too publicly censured.

CHRISTOPH. Oh, I love this indignation of yours! May all the churches of Christ be filled with it! And may they be delivered for ever from lovers of ale or any other strong liquor. To receive and retain such within their walls, will be the same with what they of old did, who received the Trojan horse.

NEOPHYTUS. And I say, may the camp of the saints, and the beloved city, be for ever delivered from them, and from all other immoral persons. But I am thinking of *Egwan*, 'twas well he did as he did; but what if he had gone to the elder first, as he had thought once to do?

EPENETUS. Why, then he would have reprov'd him for taking such a wrong step, and would have informed him better, and sent him about his business.

NEOPHYTUS. But what if *Hyderus* had justified himself, and persisted in his sin?

EPENETUS. Then *Egwan* must have took another opportunity, and desire a brother or two to go along with him, that they might use their joint endeavours to bring the offender to repentance?

NEOPHYTUS. And will you please to favor us with an instance of that nature?

EPENETUS. A servant of *Cyfiawn* (of whom you have had some account before) went to one *Byrbwyll* for something that he wanted, and desired him to be favorable and use him kindly, because he was a poor apprentice. *Byrbwyll* replied (rashly enough indeed) apprentices may live as well as their masters if they please. The young man made no reply, but when he came home, and shewing what he had bought, thoughtlessly repeats this part of the story. *Cyfiawn* hearing it, said to his servant, What did he mean by saying that apprentices, if they pleased, might live as well as their masters? The young man answered, Indeed, sir, I don't know; for he did not explain himself. The master answered, The words don't need much explaining; I hope you are very easy in your place, and resolve to be very honest in it. The servant replied, Yes, sir, and I hope shall have reason to bless the Lord that ever I came to a place, and a master, where I am taught not only an honest and reputable calling to get a livelihood by, but the fear of the Lord.

Upon this, after seeking God's face about it alone, *Cyfiawn* goes directly to *Byrbwyll*, and says to him, Brother, I am in measure grieved and offended, and have thought it my duty to come and tell you so: you told my servant, that apprentices may live if they please as well as their masters.

Byrbwyll. And you may think it your duty to return again as wise as you came: I gave you no just cause of offence, nor grief as I know of.

Cyfiawn. Your words now are very rash and provoking; but I desire I may be helped to exercise that

patience which becomes the gospel. I do apprehend that you have sinned against God, against the young man, and against me; and if you have done so, you may very well bear with a brother that comes only to call you to repentance.

Byrbwyll. May I never be guilty of greater sin against God or man, and I am safe enough, Pray how does my sin, as you call it appear?

Cyfiawn. I charge your expression with a very sinful and direct tendency to make my servant unfaithful and unjust. As a servant he wants for nothing; but a master he is not.

Byrbwyll. Then if he wants for nothing, I hope he may be said to live as well as his master; and pray where is the sin of calling him then to be pleased with his condition?

Cyfiawn. Any impartial person who considers your expression, and the occasion of it, will quickly see it could intend nothing but what was unjust: and this fig-leaf you would draw over it does but make the case worse to me. My servant said, that he would have you be favorable to him and use him kindly; because he was a poor apprentice. Pray, what was your answer to this! That he might live as well as I did, if he pleased; which must intend a making too free with things that were not his own.

Byrbwyll. I did not say, that your apprentice might live if he pleased as well as you do: but, that apprentices might live as well as their masters if they pleased.

Cyfiawn. And pray, seeing you spoke this to my apprentice, did you not as good as tell him, 'twas he himself you meant? And I do say it was no less in effect, than putting him upon robbing his master; and you may very well know, that the injustice done me, if the young man should at any time comply with your base insinuation, would be the least part of misery belonging to such a deed.

Byrbwyll. But perhaps if you did not think it the

greatest part, you would not have come to me upon such an errand.

Cyfiawn. No, my loss would not have been my sin; but what must such a fact be to the servant, who thereby violates the holy precepts of God, breaks through his own most solemn contract and agreement, abuses the trust reposed in him, hardens his own heart, exposes himself to punishment in this life, and all misery in the next; and what must the man be thought of, who by base insinuations put him upon this?

Byrbwyll. Indeed I must tell you, that I think your words are very provoking, and were it not for regard to religion, I should discover my resentment in another manner than I do. What, can't a man be free with his customers, in an innocent jest, but he must be called to account for it, and treated after this manner! Suppose I sinned; yet I think you are the greater sinner, to use me thus. I'll hear no more of your talk; I've had enough.

Cyfiawn. And, though I've had nothing of what I came for, yet I have had too much of what adds to my grief; I earnestly desire you may have repentance not to be repented of, graciously given you.

And so they parted, both under uneasiness of mind, you must think. *Byrbwyll* was vexed himself, that he should be such a fool as rashly to speak such a word as made him look like a rogue: and how to get off on't with reputation as a man, not to say a christian, he could not tell. He knew it appeared in that light wherein *Cyfiawn* took it; but to own so much and confess sorrow, was a task he could not tell how to undertake. *Cyfiawn* went home grieved under his non-success in so good a design: was pretty well assured that his servant was very honest; but still that did not take away a grain from the sinfulness of *Byrbwyll's* insinuation. Could not rest in his mind about it; prayed it over many a time, that the Lord would forgive any imprudencies that might have attended him in the step he had took, and desired the eternal Spirit to

guide and bless the next: and long it was not before he took two brethren with him, whose names were *Doeth* and *Ystyriol*, and to *Byrbwyll* they went, and *Cyfiawn* said:

Brother, I cannot be free to let things lie thus between you and I: I still apprehend myself to be a grieved person, you sinned in speaking to my servant as you did: and though God, I hope, will for ever keep him from any thing like what your expression tends to, yet your sin is the same, nor should I suffer it to lie upon you; wherefore, after seeking God about it, I have brought these brethren with me, according to our Lord's rule; hoping in this attempt we may succeed, for I desire nothing but your repentance.

Byrbwyll. If you, or either of these brethren, can make it plain that I sinned against God, yourself, or your servant, I hope I shall be willing to repent; but I think your dealing with me the last time was somewhat harsh; for I had no design to put apprentices upon plundering their masters.

Cyfiawn. The designs of your heart are too deep to be discerned by other men; to search the heart is what belongs to the Infinite mind only: but my business was, and is, only with your expression; the whole account of it I faithfully gave to these brethren, and now commit it chiefly to their management.

Doeth. The account, as I received it, of the case is thus; That upon brother *Cyfiawn's* servant's praying you to be favorable, and use him kindly, because he was a poor apprentice; you replied, that apprentices might live as their masters if they pleased; and was it just thus?

Byrbwyll. Yes, I believe it was much to that effect.

Doeth. Whenever a poor servant came to weigh and consider the import of such an expression, what do you think he could make of it? How could he fairly furnish himself with things as good and costly as his master if he pleased? He must have the command of goods or money, or both, or he could not thus

please himself with such agreeable things as his vain mind might tell him belonged to this life, which according to your expression, must be as good a one as his master's. Neither goods nor money of his own can he produce: pray which way then must he turn his hand?

Byrbwyll. Nay, I don't know, let him turn it as he will. I am very sorry that you give yourselves and me such trouble.

Ystyriol. Consider, brother, we don't come here to expose you; we desire nothing but your repentance, and I hope you shall never hear more of this story. And seeing you have unadvisedly dropt such a word, which perhaps has more evil in it than you designed, let us intreat you to be sorry before God and man.

Byrbwyll. I own 'twas rash, but perhaps it was more in jest than any thing else; I am sorry it is so insisted upon.

Ystyriol. You know that foolish jesting, not convenient, is sinful; and if it is no more than that, the word of Christ calls you to repent: moreover, it is plain, if you put the case to yourself, that you would have took it ill, if any man, especially a christian, should have expressed himself after that manner to your servant.

Doeth. Ah brother, our speech should be always so seasoned as to administer grace unto the hearers. We can never be too cautious and wise in our expressions to other people's servants. It is a very easy thing to make poor servants think their state a slavery to be broke through and avoided; a hardship under which they may, at the expence of what is not their own, help themselves. But, oh, what injury is done them by this for both worlds! I desire I never may pump a servant to draw out of him and discover the concerns of the family where he sojourns; nor by any insinuation, in jest or earnest, put him upon any thing that tends to an irregular, indiscreet, much less an unrighteous thought, word, or work. What looks with that ten-

dency, how far intended we determine not, in your expression, is what, in our dear Lord's name, we call you to repentance for.

Byrbwyll. Well, I shall not justify myself in it, it was spoken foolishly, and I believe sinfully, am very sorry I so sinned against God, the young man, and his master; and with submission I desire the young man may be sent for, that I may at present tell him so; or I desire you, brethren, to do it for me; and assure him, I shall do it for myself the first convenient opportunity. Pray for me: and dear brother *Cyfiawn*, forgive me, I hope I shall never be suffered to transgress so any more.

Cyfiawn. I bless God for you, and the repentance given you, am entirely satisfied: and, if you please, let us in prayer worship God together.

NEOPHYTUS. I must, and I hope shall for ever own, that the beauty of the Lord our God shines upon all his blessed institutions! Though there was offence given, here was proper work for every grace in the offender and the offended to remove it. Faith, prayer, wisdom, patience, compassion, confession, pity, pardon and peace, and every thing else almost that belongs to christianity. And as they acted in those instances, so I suppose in any or in every other personal offence or trespass, that might be suffered to attend them.

EPENETUS. Yes, yes, the same rule they always acted by; and if at any time they turned out of it, into ways of their own devising, they always met with proper reproof and rebuke for it.

THEOPH. But we may justly suppose, that all offences were not thus ended in those days.

EPENETUS. No; there were some brought into the church; you may take one as follows: A brother, whose name was *Gwirion*, cheapened a garment in the shop of one *Cyfrwys*, agree they could not about the price, and *Gwirion* went his way. He being gone, that garment was removed, and another not so good put in its place, whether by accident or contrivance must be

left ; however the man comes back, and takes a turn again into the shop, lays his hand upon the garment which was placed in the room of that which he at first cheapened, and says, Stay, this is the garment. Ay, ay, says *Cyfrwys*, that's the garment. Well, said he, will you take the money for it? Yes, replied the other, but more than you offered, I hope. Then said *Gwirion*, I will give but so much more, or leave it. Said *Cyfrwys*, I will not turn you away, because you are a friend, take it. Accordingly he paid for it, and took it with him. But when he came home, and more narrowly examined what he had bought, he saw plainly that he was deceived. He carried it back under concern, and told *Cyfrwys*, that that was not the garment which he meant ; but he replied, it was what he had sold. But, says *Gwirion*, you told me what was not true, you said that this was the garment. I did so, said the other, and I say so still, and this is the garment, and that's the garment, and so is that yonder. But surely, said *Gwirion*, this is not agreeable to the christian religion, the simplicity and the sincerity of it : there is a sort of a lie some how or other in what you say ; and I desire you to repent of it, and give me the right garment, or my money. Says *Cyfrwys*, I am no liar, you have the garment you bought, and so pray trouble me no longer. The next day he takes with him two brethren more, and they endeavoured to fasten upon him a conviction of unfair dealing and untruth ; but he was proof against all, and would not hear them.

Upon this they all returned to *Gwirion's* house, and there they prayed and mourned before the Lord : not for the loss the offended person sustained in being deceived, but because a *christian* should deceive him, and justify himself in that iniquity. Now *Gwirion* thought, that according to the laws of the great King, it was his duty to tell the church ; and the brethren with him thought so too. Accordingly, in a very little time, he went to *Didwyll*, one of the ruling elders, and told him all the story, what was done to him,

what he did in order to bring the person to repentance, and how the case stood then.

NEOPHYTUS. But you said, that he thought it his duty to tell the church, and he tells only one of the ruling elders.

EPENETUS. And reason good for that; because all things were brought into the church by the elders. They could never have done things decently and in order without that, nor kept the church from being the seat of confusion. Things crude and undigested, frivolous or unseasonable, to the reproach of the laws of the Redeemer, destructive of the peace and beauty of the church, would perhaps frequently have been brought in among them. But one elder being informed, he consulted the rest, that every thing might be brought, under public consideration in the best season and order. But I told you, that in this case one of the elders was informed of the whole of it, and he consulted his brethren; and upon hearing all the particulars, they could not see but the aggrieved person had done his duty, and that the offence was such as called now for public notice to be took of it: and they ordered a brother to acquaint *Cyfrwys*, that if God continued his life and health, he must not fail being at the next church-meeting: and indeed in those early days of christianity, the members seldom missed being present. After a considerable time spent in the worship of God, and the work of his house, *Didwylt* spoke as follows:

Brethren our Lord is upright, and there is no unrighteousness with him; he loveth justice and hateth iniquity; and all those who love him should hate evil: but while in this life, imperfections are like to attend us, and repentance not to be repented of is like to be one part of our reasonable service. Some who were members of the church of Corinth are reproved by Paul, for doing wrong to, and defrauding their brethren! Unto our grief we have something among us of the same nature.—And here he goes particularly

over the whole story between *Gwirion* and *Cyfrwys*, and takes notice of the steps took in order to bring the offender to repentance, but how all has been ineffectual; and then told the church, that it was the will of Christ they should now as a church consider the case.

Yefan. Brother *Cyfrwys*, you are here present, can you think that there is any just exception to be made against this representation or account of the case? You have your liberty to make the affairs as plain as you can, that the church of Christ may with all the advantage possible judge of it.

Cyfrwys. The account in the main is right, he did cheapen the garment and departed; but as I can, I hope, dispose of my own goods into what part of my shop I please, I removed that garment for my pleasure, and hung another in its place. He returned, and said, Is this the garment? and I said, It was the garment; and every body that sees it must own that it is the garment: as much as this as I wear is the garment, or that as you wear is the garment, and yet he would charge me with telling a lye, and deceiving him; but I hope the church will clear me, and call him to repentance for giving me this trouble, and doing injury to my name as a fair trader.

Dewi. Can any mortal think that this satisfies your own conscience! Whether you removed the garment expecting his return or not, we shall not consider, though it looks very much like it; but when he asked, whether that was the garment, you knew he meant the garment he had cheapened before; and you deceived him, and against your very conscience told him it was. In a way that discovers very little sincerity, you would have us think you told him no lie; whereas it is plain to a demonstration you did: for though that was a garment, which you put in the place of the former, yet it was not *the* garment, and you knew it was not. He that speaks against his own knowledge any thing with a design to deceive another, tells a lie; you most certainly did so. And a very awful crime it is: and

whether your standing up in vindication of it in the church, discovers most insincerity or folly, I am not able to determine. All who name the name of christ, are under the strongest obligations to depart from all unrighteousness. Your case is plain; you are a great transgressor against God and man, heathen men and christians; you have distressed us, you have grieved us, and if we stood up in your vindication we should be a den of thieves. Are you a christian? Did your heavenly Father then when he ordered forth for you the best robe, serve you, as you served your brother? Are you a follower of God as a dear child? Would you be willing any man living should serve you in such a manner? Could you in the presence of your family, some of whom at least knew what you had done, worship God in the evening of that day, and desire him to bless the work of your hands and establish it? Or could you go to God at all, with whom no unrighteousness shall dwell? Can such a fact as this be without concomitants of its own kind? God knows: however, this we know, and under it grieve and mourn.—Brethren, you church of the living God, if you do, as a church, charge *Cyfrwys* with the sin of fraud and lying, admonish him, and call him to shew immediate and sincere repentance, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did.

Upon this, turning to *Cyfrwys*, who was at that time in tears, You see the church's indignation against your sin, and their compassion towards you. Your iniquity they hate, your person they pity; your real repentance they greatly desire: and I pray you now to give into us some account how it is with you.

Cyfrwys. Behold I am vile, sinful, and base, and self-condemned. I have done that which was evil, and is now bitter. I have dishonored Christ, I have wronged my brother, I have grieved the church, I have given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, I have brought a bad reproach upon the most righteous interest of the holy Redeemer. I cannot tell you how

'tis with me, only in the dust I lie and loath myself; yet endeavouring to look to him whom I have pierced, with whom there is forgiveness that he may be feared. I thank you for your care over me, and your kind endeavours to bring me to repentance: and may it appear to be repentance indeed, so long as I live in this world! Amends to my wronged brother I can never make in every sense, but I hope I shall endeavour it: and as to the stain and scandal I have brought upon your holy profession, my heart is grieved and broke under a sense of it; but how it may be removed I know not, though I hope I greatly desire it: do with me as seemeth good unto you.

With many tears truly he spoke these things, and with many tears the assembly heard them; and *Yefan* spoke for his instruction and encouragement what he thought most convenient; and to the church he said, Brethren, if you judge him a sincere penitent, receive his repentance, call him to a close walk with God, and testify your love; signify it by lifting up your hands. Which was again unanimously done; and in affectionate prayer and praise the meeting was concluded. And poor *Gwirion* went to *Cyfrwys* immediately, and shewed him all tokens of respect and love.

THEOPHILUS. Here we may see how the Lord did shine upon his own appointments! The wisdom of man may be ready to reckon such methods as these very mean, but unto all that believe Christ in his person, Christ in his appointments is the wisdom and power of God. And this offers an invincible reason why all church-members should be real believers in Christ: for what regard would a worldly person, like to suffer nothing in what he valued most, have shewn to such spiritual weapons as these?

SYLLOGIS. And therefore when carnal persons came to lay claim to the name of a christian church, the carnal governors thereof, in their carnal wisdom, found out carnal weapons, as most fit for their business: but among them that believe, spiritual weapons are mighty through God.

CHRISTOPH. And I am thinking, what a mighty honor our dear Lord has conferred upon his poor churches, in that they are thus to watch over the members belonging to them, and blessed so in the use of those means Christ has directed them to, for establishing the weak, healing the sick and wounded?

NEOPHYTUS. By sick and wounded I suppose you mean backsliders in heart and life; but some of them are never healed, but, as I have been informed, in the use of means are hardened, separated from church-fellowship, despise that awful ordinance, and some of them, seeming in stupidity, have died unrestored and unconcerned.

THEOPH. You make my flesh tremble; and I wish I could say, that what you have mentioned seldom or never falls out. But I think I can say, that where the ordinance is duly administered, it never falls out, nor is seen but among lovers of ale, who drink themselves into a spirit they esteem big and brave, and harden themselves even against God himself; which, notwithstanding the noise they may make about religion, I look upon to be nothing but a strong daring degree of *atheism*.

PHILAL. Yes; I suppose also among *heretics* it has been observed, who, because they received not the love of the truth, were given up to strong delusions that they should believe a lie.

NEOPHYTUS. But pray, EPENETUS, will you favor us with a story that will carry us a little farther into acquaintance with that church discipline which the rules of the word require, and *social religion* calls for?

EPENETUS. I told you before of one *Diwall*, visited and reprov'd by one of the ruling elders. That man was no great honor to religion, nor of much good use in his place nor profession. He hardened many a heathen and grieved the brotherhood; and for disagreeable things, whereof they were informed, they regularly and constantly dealt with him. Whatever they charged him with, he always would say, *Prove it, prove it;*

and sometimes it might be difficult for them to do so: and sometimes he would do all he could to invalidate what evidence they had; and when a fact was proved plain to a demonstration, he would say, *I am sorry, what would you have me say more?* Thus he continually distressed them; and always when he thought he was caught, would repent; and evermore have that word at his fingers ends *If he says he repents, thou shalt forgive him*. But their is a time for the iniquity of the Amorites to be full; and you shall briefly hear how it fell out with him.

One day a poor brother, whose name was *Diniwed*, bought of him a piece of goods, paid for it, and went home. There came accidentally into his house an acquaintance, and seeing this new piece of goods, asked him what he gave for it: he told him, that he had paid for it so much. I hope, says the acquaintance, you will not take it ill of me, if I say you don't understand such things. *Diniwed* replied, No, nor of any body else; yea I told the person of whom I bought it, that I did not understand it, and desired him to deal only fairly by me, which he said he would. The acquaintance replied, I wish you had bought yours of the person I bought mine of; for I have the very same with this for very little above half your money. Says *Diniwed* Pray who did you buy yours of? He answered, of *Diwall*; and, says *Diniwed*, I bought mine of the very same person; and therefore mine, seeing it is a great deal dearer, must be a great deal better than yours. Says the other, I'll fetch mine this minute. And so he did, and upon the compare, they were exactly the same.

Upon this, poor *Diniwed* was struck with astonishment and confusion. What, to serve a poor brother thus! Did I refer myself to him, to be buyer and seller himself, to be thus served? Well, I must go and tell him his fault, and shall be glad if you'll please to go with me. No, no, replied the other, if I should go with you, he'll fix a greater fault upon you and me too, for

breaking that rule, *Go tell him his fault between thee and him alone.* And accordingly *Diniwed* went himself, after taking some time to consider the matter over, and refer himself, and the whole of what might now lie before him, to the Lord; greatly desiring to be kept in it from self-seeking, folly, and passion. He came, found *Diwall* at home, and spoke to him as follows:

Diniwed. Sir, I hope I am a poor servant of Christ, in all things willing to live honestly, and I used to think that all the servants of Christ were of that mind: but either I was mistaken in that, or mistaken in you; not in *that*, I'm well assured, but with regard to yourself, I am sorry you gave me occasion to fear. You have deceived me, you have deceived me! You told me you would use me fairly, and you knew in your conscience, if I can properly use such a word, that you designed otherwise. You made me pay almost double what the thing was worth.

Diwall. Then the more fool you; and still the greater fool to come here with such a story. Pray go about your business, and if you know how, make the best of what you have bought.

Diniwed. Had I lost so much money out of my pocket, or had a professed heathen robbed me or deceived me, it would have grieved me but a very little; but for you, a professed christian, to do as you did, goes to my very heart. You have sinned against God, you have acted with great injustice towards me, and I think it my duty to call you to repentance.

Diwall. You call me to repentance! Pray do you go home and repent, and mind your duty there.— And so he withdrew in a passion. And the poor man went home, and mourned much for his non-success, desired direction what to do further in it, that he might discharge his duty and glorify the Redeemer. It was not long before he took two brethren with him, and one of them was the very person who had bought the very some goods of the very same man, a great deal

cheaper; and to *Diwall* they came, and endeavoured to fasten a conviction upon him of his sin; the person especially who had bought of him the same goods, for very little more than half the price, urged it hard, for he thought he had very good advantage of his side. But says

Diwall. Then I thank you, master, you reward me well for my kindness; But I am sorry you give me this trouble, and in a word I must tell you, my *friends*, if I can tell you so, that I sell, and shall sell, as people have wisdom to buy; and other answer you shall have none from your humble servant.—And so withdrew.

THEOPH. Oh fie! what a base unrighteous disposition did this man discover! And pray what did poor *Diniwed* do then?

EPENETUS. Why, he and his companions went directly to the elder, *Didwyll*, found him at home, as I told you before he generally was, and told him all the story punctually. He received them kindly, and talked to them with affection and judgment, wished them all encouragement from Heaven, and told them he would take what care he could of this affair.

Didwyll upon this, quickly goes to his son-in-law's, *Yefan*'s house, and the other elders were sent for; he gave them the whole account, very distinctly; then one of them went to prayer for divine direction, and then, in the best manner they could, considered what was their duty. And they unanimously judged it was the pleasure of their King and Law-giver, Christ Jesus, that *Diwall* should be the very next church-meeting publicly accused of, and deal with, for injustice and covetousness; and a brother was ordered to tell him so.

The church-meeting day being come, and prayer made, and other parts of worship performed, *Yefan* speake to the church in substance as follows:

Dear brethren, unto all those who are lovers of the Lord, and we hope through grace we are of the number, it is given as a special charge that they should hate

evil: whereby must be meant and intended all sin, and all appearance of it. All sin is exceeding sinful; but there are some sins among the children of men, which either in their own nature, or by reason of some circumstances attending them, may be called *great evils*. And whatever persons may imagine, I here declare that *covetousness*, however it may be cloaked, is one of the *greatest* of evils. In scripture it is nothing less than downright idolatry, and a sin that should not be so much as named among christians. For the iniquity of it God was wroth, and the covetous person the Lord abhorreth; and all that serve the Lord should be haters of covetousness. I grant 'tis a sin not very easily discovered and discerned, and therefore the more dangerous, and to be guarded against with care. If it enters the heart, it's turned away from God; like them of old, of whom God complains, that when they externally appeared in public worship, their heart went after their covetousness; if it enters a church, and is entertained and encouraged there, it will be the ruin of it; for the covetous cannot inherit the kingdom of God: and therefore I may justly take up our dear Lord's words, *Take heed and beware of covetousness*. I look upon all injustice to be covetousness, and all covetousness to be injustice; and therefore in a present work that lies before us, which distress and duty lead us to, though these two words may be used promiscuously, one or t'other, apart or together, the same sin is intended, a greedy desire to enjoy, and a crafty pursuit after what is not one's own: and this sin, horrid as it is, I charge a member of ours, *Diwall* here present, with; and call him either to justify himself, if sincerely he can or to signify unfeigned and evangelical repentance.

Diwall. Sir, I think it my duty to justify myself, and trust it will be no difficult task, before persons of judgment and impartiality. But, until I hear more said, I think it is enough for me to reply, that I am *not guilty*.

Didwyll. I am very willing that *Diwall* should be justified, provided it can be done according to the rules of the word; but to justify the wicked will appear to be an abomination. Brethren, he is charged with injustice and covetousness, which is the same with denying God to be the chiefest good, and making this present evil world his ultimate end. This, awful as it is, we are ready to prove. He that withholdeth more than is meet; he that oppresses the poor he is concerned with, he who, if he can, does not act with justice in buying or selling! he who makes the things of another world give way to the things of this; I say again, he who discovers himself to be a walker in these paths, or in either of them, must be deemed a covetous person; but we are ready to prove that *Diwall* walks in them all.

Diwall. The first I can't be guilty of, for I give to the poor; and with regard to myself, I am not like those narrow souls that dare not enter a public-house: as to the second, I appeal to the poor I'm concerned with: in the third, 'tis to be hoped my customers will clear me: and in the fourth my own conscience.

Dyfal. Brethren what he gives to the poor is known only to himself, and I suppose not to any body else; if he singles out any poor body to give something to, it must be some favourite one, to honor him and to speak in his praise! our deacons know, that at public collections he gives nothing. And as to his kindness to himself in public-houses, 'tis well known that some persons have been possessed with more evil spirits than one; he may be a lover of strong liquors, though covetous: but there is this remarkable in it, that he never loves to keep company with any in those public houses, but those who are in some respect or other under him; he never treats, but is frequently treated, and that even by persons in mean circumstances, who in some sense may be under his iron yoke. The company of gentlemen of sense, who have no dependence on him, he ever avoids. As to the second, let

those come forth, to whom he lends a little money, as he pretends, without interest, and tell us what slavery in journeys, service, or other ways of excessive gratitude they go through for him. Let them come and tell us for what low wages they work, or they must be turned off, and pay him immediately some little sums that lie in their hands. It is by this time grown almost to a proverb concerning all that are under him, *Let them take care to keep themselves honest, and he'll take care to keep them poor.* With regard to the third, we have a very recent instance of his justice.—Here the whole story of *Diniwed* was mentioned, and how he said that he would sell as people had wit to buy.—And as to the fourth, I know family-duty is not kept up, neither constantly nor seasonably; he is often pursuing his more beloved views in public-houses, when he ought to be on his knees with his family; and I myself also know, that his poor apprentice is allowed neither time nor candle for any thing that looks like religion.

Diwyd, another of the ruling elders said, Brethren, it is our principle to walk in righteousness and mercy towards all, and therefore God forbid we should discover any injustice towards *Diwall*; to charge him with things that are not true, would be very unjust; and to suffer him to live in any sin known to us, would be equally so. Therefore to do him justice, and to shew him mercy, we shall call forth proper evidences to every thing he is charged with. As to his withholding more than is meet, the deacons, we hope, are evidences sufficient.

Deacons, unanimously said, He seldom or never gives any thing into our public collections for the poor; and as to his duty in our honored preaching elders, who by all the church, except himself, are esteemed worthy of double honor, when we consider his worldly substance, we are ashamed to mention it; and what he gives comes with such sour faces and reluctance, as if he never received any good by their ministry, and

awkwardly insinuates, that they may live without any help from him or any body else, and that when they want charity, it is time enough to come then.

Diwall. A noble acknowledgment of my kindness! I was under no obligation to give any thing; so here I hope I have done no injustice.

Diwyd. Whatever part of your substance God in his precepts or providence calls for, it is rank injustice to withhold it; and that you shall know when you appear before a greater tribunal. But, brethren, as to oppression, the second thing he is charged with, we have many witnesses, but shall call forth but one or two; pray, brother *Anghenus*, in a few words tell the church what you know.

Anghenus. Glad to be employed by persons as could pay me, I for some time worked under him; and if he thought it difficult for me to be employed any where else, he would always make me work for low wages; and then in paying me, he would always make me take a great part of the little due to me in goods, which though I told him I did not want, yet he said I must take them or be turned off; and if I did not want them, I might sell them; but I never could sell them for near the price I was forced to give him for them.

Diwyd. Brother *Diddrwg*, pray tell the church what you know.

Diddrwg. In my wants I borrowed a little sum of money of him, and he seemed very ready to lend it me, though he borrowed it for me, and said he would have no interest for it; for he said it may lie in my way to serve him. This seemed kind; but I must say I never went through such slavery: I worked for him, I toiled for him, I slaved for him, and yet seldom could so much as hope that I pleased him; and though I could ill spare it, I did treat him, and glad if I could procure a smile from him at any rate. In short, he did ride over me as a perfect tyrant; and when I paid him, it was like a deliverance to me from Egyptian bondage, and I blessed God.

Diwall. Here the church again may see how well I am rewarded for my kindnesses; however I promise, if it may pass for repentance, that I will offend these friends of mine no more so.

Diwyd. As to injustice in selling, we have had the awful story of it already in *Diniwed's* case; and as for his way of buying, as it lies in his power, you shall have it, brethren, in a very late instance, wherein brother *Achenog* was concerned. Pray, brother, give the church the account.

Achenog. I was of late in great need of money, and had a piece of goods by me, which I took and offered it to sale to *Diwall*. He knew I was but in low circumstances, and thought by my bringing the piece of goods, that my need put me under a necessity of selling it at any price; and upon my offering it to him, he would not look on it, but told me he wanted none, and turned away. I called after him, and prayed him to look on it, for it was very good; he looked, and despised it. I desired him to buy it, for I stood in present need: he told me, No, he did not care for it, it was not so good as I talked of. I again told him it would be a kindness to me if he took it, and I should be very much obliged to him. He then said, You must take such a part of the value of it in goods. I told him that would by no means suit me, I must have all in money: then said he, If I must do so, you shall have but so much for it: which was not near what 'twas worth between man and man; but my necessity was great, and I complied. But, says he, What, must you have ready money? I told him, my need was such that it must be so: then, said he, if you will not abate so much, I will not have your piece, carry it where you please. He knew as well as I, that my time, being a poor man, was precious, and that perhaps I could not immediately meet with a person to buy it; and so under pinching poverty and want, which he took the advantage of, I was forced to undersell my goods.

Diwall. I will stand to it, that I must provide for

my family, the word of God makes it my duty, and I must buy and sell as I can, I hope I paid you all, I an't in your debt.

Diwyd. And then, brethren, as to his preferring the things of this world to the great concerns of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the glory to come, brother *Dyfal* has already made that very plain and evident. When have any of our private religious meetings been honored with his company? How is God worshipped in his family? Which of the neighbours have ever gone in and found him engaged earnestly in the worship of God? Perhaps it is not convenient to ask any of those persons who are best acquainted with his religious conduct at home. I am very sorry he appears to be such a person, yet wearing the christian name; and I must say, I am sorry that he, who knows a great deal more by himself than all this, or any thing else we can prove, should yet before God and man say, that he is *not guilty*.

Gruffydd, another of the elders, said, In this we may see the dreadful nature of sin in general; and of the sin of covetousness in particular. All sin is blind and daring, and in it persons will proceed, if not restrained, till they are past feeling. Thus, in most sins, persons are gradually hardened. But when any will not retain God in their knowledge, But fall in love with this present world, he, who is called the God of this world, immediately blinds their eyes, whereupon they think themselves the best and most valuable of men. And though they know that many others seem to be in some things more innocent than they, yet they conclude it is only for want of capacity and opportunity. Therefore are they jealous of every body, but lovers of no body upon earth. They are, to a man, despisers of others, and justifiers of themselves. *He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hands, he loveth to oppress.* And *Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance; in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.* Hosea xii. 7, 8. So it is not at all strange unto me, nor it need not be

strange to this church of Christ, that a covetous oppressor should justify himself. What he thinks most valuable he pursues, and being so blinded, how is it possible for him to do otherwise? But I trust that the eternal God, whom we serve and fear, will guide the church in judgment.

Dewi. Dear brethren, you have heard in some measure, the nature of the sin of covetousness opened, and one, who as yet stands member with you, charged with it. You have heard him say, that he is not guilty of it; what proof has been produced in a more general way, or upon more particular instances, you have doubtless attended unto; and therefore I need not repeat. If any person had been any ways inclined to speak any thing in his vindication, you know that upon leave asked, there is always liberty granted; and as for himself, all liberty of speech has been allowed him. Now I must say, if you do, as a church of the living God, judge that he has sufficiently justified himself from such a charge, signify it by lifting up your hands. But not one of them did. Then he says again, If you do, as a church of Christ, judge *Diwall* guilty of the sin of covetousness, admonish him for it, and call him to unfeigned repentance, signify it by lifting up your hands. Which they unanimously did.

Whereupon *Dewi* said to him, Christ, by this grieved church of his, calls you to repentance for all your sinful ways, and particularly for your covetousness and oppression. And on the admonition, and that day's work, they earnestly in prayer desired the blessing of heaven, and so the meeting concluded.

THEOPHILUS. Well, a church acting in such order, and in such a spirit, may well be said to be Christ's throne of judgment upon earth; the thoughts whereof strike my heart with reverential awe.

NEOPHYTUS. Indeed so it does mine, though I never saw such a thing as this story contains in my life. But, pray, what became of the admonished man?

EPENETUS. The next church-meeting he appeared

to be the same man, rather more hardened, seemed very angry with the church, especially its officers, told them he was sensible he was not without his imperfections no more than they, and hoped he should be pardoned as well as they; and said, 'twas well his happiness did not depend upon them. Whereupon *Yefan* put it to the church, and they unanimously admonished him a second time, and called him to repentance.

CHRISTOPH. Thus they shewed forth the lenity and forbearance of Christ; and what did they do then?

EPENETUS. To the third church-meeting, though he was sent for, he would not come; each of the elders, with grief and sorrow of heart, declared what rules Christ had left for his churches to walk by, and what means should be used in order to bring offenders to repentance, and what was the last duty proposed by Zion's King: that the elders and the church had conscientiously gone through all the duties but the last, and that their hearts even trembled to enter upon that which appeared now, as they thought, to be their immediate duty, but Christ must be obeyed, and all appointed means to maintain the honor of Christ, the real dignity of his interest, the holiness, peace, and purify of his house, and the bringing to repentance poor obstinate offenders, must be used. Wherefore says *Dewi's* brethren, If you do as a church of Christ, judge it your duty to separate *Diwall* from your communion as a church, and do now actually in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, put him away from among yourselves, signify it by the lifting up your hands. Which they unanimously did. And thereupon *Dewi* declared him actually cut off, and with great enlargedness and affection, prayed with many tears for a blessing upon that awful ordinance Christ had called them to go through; greatly desiring of God, that it might be for the subduing his sin who was so cut off, that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

NEOPHYTUS. Very awful truly: but why was he not delivered to Satan?

EPENETUS. Because Christ has not committed that power to any church ; nor does that expression, where it is used in scripture, denote excommucication only, but something extraordinary, perhaps not known since that day.

NEOPHYTUS. Were all who were excommunicated dealt with just after this manner ?

EPENETUS. No ; but this was the ordinary way : in dealing with drunkards, rebellious children grown up, and heretics, they varied from this method in some things.

NEOPHYTUS. I wish you would favor us with the account of them.

EPENETUS. Perhaps another opportunity, if God will ; you see at present our time fails us. May we be helped to adore grace for complete salvation in Christ, and may all our life be to his praise.

CHRISTOPH. *Amen*, dear **EPENETUS** ! and may the refreshing presence of our Redeemer be with us to the very end !

THEOPH. And I heartily wish the eternal Spirit would sanctify us throughout, in soul, and body, and spirit, and guide all our walk, that we may never grieve a church of Christ, but adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

THE END OF THE SIXTH DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE VII.

The Sin of Drunkenness exposed. The Offence being of a public nature, the Offender must be brought immediately to public repentance. One publicly admonished of it; Debates at the Church Meeting, whether they should immediately proceed to cut him off; carried in the negative: Their further Proceedings upon it. How they should carry it toward the admonished Person; he is not to be admitted to Lord's Table. He is again admonished; the Offender sorely tempted; seasonably visited and prayed with by a private Member; is wonderfully restored. His deep Humiliation and Repentance declared before the Church; the whole Church with many Tears of great Joy, testify their dear Love to him, and his Freedom to their intimate Fellowship in the Lord. Another Member accused of the same Sin; his trifling Excuses; afterwards humbled, reformed, and recovered; his affectionate and thankful Declaration of it before the Church.

CHRISTOPHILUS.

WELCOME, my dear neighbours; I began to think you long, in waiting I tasted something of what attends hope deferred, but now you are come I am refreshed: thinking of what is said of Paul, that when he saw the brethren he thanked God and took courage.

PHILALETHES. There is a pleasure enjoyed in the

mere presence of our godly brethren; the very countenance of a friend imparts something very agreeable to the mind; and christian conversation add much thereunto: but doubtless while alone your thoughts were profitably employed on some important subject.

CHRISTOPH. My thoughts are generally attended with much confusion; a disorderly multitude they appear to be, whether scattered or in clusters; and when I endeavour to gather them to some fruitful meditation for my spiritual advantage, either they avoid the subject, or jostle and crowd in such a manner, as to disappoint often my very best designs: but what my mind was principally engaged in, while here in waiting, was the sermon I heard last Lord's-day upon those words, *And be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.* Many excellent things then delivered I have forgot, but I remember how with grief of soul the minister observed what an empty generation of professors of christianity our day abounds with. Full of confidence, said he, they may be, and full of noise, and full of wine, or full of ale; but where are the persons that appear filled with the Spirit of God!

NEOPHYTUS. Truly I did not see you at our place, I thought you were abroad: come, I shall be glad to hear something more of the contents of the sermon.

CHRISTOPH. Why truly I was not prepared to write it, but I gave all the attention I could; but my being eager to receive and retain, I think was rather a hindrance to me; however I found the man in the main to be in an excellent spirit; he was full for the grace of God, that teaches persons to deny ungodliness. He insisted much upon the bounty of God in his covenant of grace, giving his free Spirit to his people, the glory of his habitation, and his operations where he so dwelt. He observed to his auditory how contrary to all that is revealed, and even to reason itself, it must be, once to imagine that a person full of wine or full of ale, should be filled with all the fulness of God, or according to the words of his text, *Filled*

with the Spirit. He appealed unto all the contents of the gospel; he appealed to the church; he appealed to wives and children starving in a spiritual, and half starved in a temporal sense; yea, he appealed to their own consciences; and was very particular and affectionate upon each of these with much concern and many tears, and told them that the prating profession of a tippler did but draw a cloud over the grace of God, and aggravate his own guilt.

NEOPHYTUS. And how was it with the auditory?

CHRISTOPH. Why really some of them were in tears and discovered a very great concern; and some of them looked about them and took snuff, and seemed to care for none of those things; and there were some who had uneasiness and indignation in their countenances, and with a sneer would look towards one another; and when they came out I heard one of them say to his companions, *he g'on it us;—is this preaching the gospel?*

NEOPHYTUS. Good now! What part of England were you in? a great way off of Potheina to be sure!

CHRISTOPH. Ay, so I was; and I heartily wish that such a company and custom may never come near us. You have heard of the staple trade of England, the wool business; and among other places you have heard of a certain market town in Wiltshire, where upon a little flow of trade in the woollen way, there was spent 7000*l.* in one year, about four or five years ago, in strong beer. Their brethren, the weavers and wool-combers, are generally of their mind all over the nation; and who is not so, is like a firebrand plucked out of the burning. Among and near such a people I happened to be; the scum of the land, worse than the plague in the parishes where they are planted. One man of them shall drink as much as should satisfy ten, and then stagger, reel, and rave, and curse the trade, and blame all the world but himself. If it was possible to find out fit persons to inspect their manners with full power to reform them or restrain them, it might

prove an universal mercy to the land, and of vast advantage to the woolen manufacture.

THEOPH. But sure none of those drinking persons pretend to religion.

CHRISTOPH. That they do, and many of them abound in confidence, are very great casuists, and while they are drinking a dozen of ale, will examine and determine I do't know how many controversies; and the more quarts they drink, the more contemptible every thing appears to them that stands in their way.

THEOPH. But I hope none of them are church-members!

CHRISTOPH. As I told you before, there are some of that infamous business, as now with grief it must be called, who are as firebrands plucked out of the burning, godly persons who adorn the doctrine they profess; but they are few, and rather than lie continually under the banter and sneers of a disagreeable crew, chuse if possible to follow their callings in some little retired places by themselves; they are a comfort to the churches whereof they are members: but there are too many who put on seriousness and tenderness of conscience for a little while, and get in; and by little and little, get too well acquainted with the pot and the pitcher, and sore trials they have often proved, I understand, to the godly; and yet to question their godliness, would be a greater sin in you than any thing you can charge them with.

NEOPHYTUS. Then I understand you have had some particular account of those persons who are generally such great strangers to Potheina; pray will you favor us with a brief relation of what you've heard?

CHRISTOPH. Why really sir, the story is not a very pleasant one, therefore 'tis with reluctance, a thing not very common between you and I, that I comply with your request; and if I am very brief, I hope you will excuse me. By a serious aged christian, a mourner

in Zion, I was informed, that before the wool business entered among them, for he remembered the time, they were a sober solid people; but upon the entrance of that business, and the planting of masters among them, who coveted to multiply hands, things began to take a different turn, and what they called pleasant banter took place of serious religion; and the promoting a drinking life, seemed to be a very great, if not the principle end of their life. For this, (says he,) they have their fixed hours daily, if not more than once in a day, of sending for ale, and each man is to be the messenger in his turn. They have also their private pitcher-laws and forfeitures: upon the visit of a straggler there must be ale extraordinary: upon entrance into business there must be a treat, and the same at parting: then there must be no buying nor selling but at alehouses, let the business be ever so small: a solemn observation of feasts they carefully attended to; the vain days which the prince of darkness and they have fixed to the authors or patrons of their business; and put other trades upon the same sinful course as to their peculiar days, wherein themselves are sure to bear a principal part; and even in our town, (says he,) where the parish *idol* feast was forgot, they used means to recover the memory of the day, entered upon games, and renewed the vanity, which always ends in plenty of ale: and when at the alehouse, there is not a meaner thing in their esteem than to be a starter, and hinder the house, as they phrase it. Evening clubs they frequently have, and to make it the more honorable, generally in some private house, where the master may excel in stories and laughter, reflection and banter. There are also frequent invitations to new ale *fats*, which they never refuse, and thither they carry their children with them, who if they drink well are praised as father's *noun* boys; in this way of death they teach them, and thus the infection spreads from parents to children, and from neighbour to neighbour, till, (says he,) to our great grief we have lived to see idleness, drunkenness,

poverty, confidence, and pride come in upon us like a flood. Oh when will the Spirit of the Lord *lift up his standard!*

NEOPHYTUS. Well, the Lord be with his preaching servants, in such places! Sure they have enough, without extraordinary support, to break their hearts. Now I do'nt wonder you were backward to relate the story; may I always see the good of Jerusalem, and never hear such another.

THEOPH. Then my dear NEOPHYTUS, I will take the liberty to relate a story of a different nature, which perhaps you have heard something of before now, though the thing fell out a little before your time. There has not been in the memory of any man living an alehouse at Potheina, but some of us remember a net spread in our sight. Not far from us, upon the estate of one that belongs not to us, at the side of a by-road there was an alehouse set up, with the sign of the *Dragon*; the fellow used all the methods he was master of to ensnare us, or our children and servants. He would buy of us, what he said he wanted; he made a supper and invited our families, but never a parent nor child, master nor servant went. He sent some of his dainties, and with humble service desired us to accept of a taste; we all refused. And one day complaining to an acquaintance of his, telling him how unkind the inhabitants of Potheina were, who never would suffer any who belonged to them to enter within his doors, and having no customers, his strong beer was spoiled, and he was half ruined; his acquaintance, waggishly disposed, told him, that he had the wrong sign, for the inhabitants of Potheina were to a man and a child resolved to oppose the *Dragon*, but professed themselves followers of the *Lamb*; and therefore he thought he would do well to change his sign. The fellow accordingly did; and set up the sign of the *Lamb*: and one day meeting a servant of mine, said to him, I am very sorry I offended the good inhabitants of Potheina by a disagreeable sign over my door; but my

humble service to them, and let them know that I have parted with it, and have now the sign of the *Lamb*. Says my servant, I fancy our people will think that he speaks like a *dragon*, and wo'nt come near him. No more we did not; and after two or three brewings, which his friends from a great distance helped him to drink out, he left the place, and we never had an alehouse near us since.

NEOPHYTUS. A pleasant story this; I thank you most excellent THEOPHILUS: I wish that unto late posterity an alehouse may never be seen at or near Potheina.

THEOPH. I remember we thought it our duty to pray to our God against that house, and that he would keep us and our families, and confound the man and his measures, break him and remove him; and beside our ordinary times, in our families, we thought it our duty to set some time apart on very purpose, and God graciously heard us.

NEOPHYTUS. Dear, what awful business must that be, that the godly can at the throne of grace pray against! But are not public-houses lawful?

THEOPH. Ay, to be sure, and expedient too, for the convenience of travellers, provided there be no more than what are necessary for that purpose, and provided the laws of Christ are there duly regarded; and what those laws be, perhaps we may quickly hear something of; for here's our beloved EPHENETUS just come.

EPHENETUS. My dear brethren and friends, excuse me, a particular urgent business detained me: I find your company and conversation always profitable and pleasant, therefore it is not usual with me to be the last.

PHILAL. Dear EPHENETUS, I am heartily glad you are come, my heart is even sunk within me in hearing CHRISTOPHILUS relate what himself has very lately seen and heard abroad. The many thousands employed in the woollen manufacture are according to him,

some few excepted, a plague unto the nation, the very shame of England, and the distress of churches; for they are sots and drunkards to a proverb, and every sinner of them a destroyer of much good. They ensnare and defile wherever they come, and by them the infection spreads to the temporal ruin and the eternal danger of many thousands of families. Oh Britons, happy times before such a generation was known or heard of!

EPENETUS. It must be granted that they have brought a blast upon their name and business, and perhaps such a one as can never be removed; and what adds much unto their misery is their pride and stupidity, both the natural consequences of their sinful practice. Reproof they never can kindly receive, and they hate to reform. But though they have, in general, added much to the shame, pride, and poverty of the nation, yet I am inclined to think that Britain never saw times so happy, since it was inhabited, as to have never a drunkard within its borders. The account which Mr. Hugh Peters gave of New England in his sermon before the parliament is very singular, yet very true, that for the seven years he had been there, he did not see a beggar, he did not hear an oath, nor did his eyes behold a drunkard. Such was the beauty of the congregational churches, following Christ in the wilderness! But trials in measure have always attended the churches; nor was the first church at Caerludd without them. For though the Britons in general were a brave people, no slaves to appetite, but given to industry and action, nevertheless there were some among them who might be called the epicures of that day, the blemishes of Britain: and even a few too much inclined to strong liquors crept, as I have intimated, into the first church at Caerludd.

NEOPHYTUS. Really I thought so by what you said in the conclusion of our last conference; for you intimated that their way of dealing with drunkards in some respects differed from some steps they took towards some other offenders. Now I hope you'll favor us with a more particular account thereof.

EPENETUS. My meaning was, that they did not look upon drunkenness to be an offence of that nature that required private previous dealing, first by one, and then by two, and then if the person would not repent tell it the church; but the offence being of a public nature, the offender must be brought immediately to public repentance. Not but they might use their liberty in brotherly love with him in a private way; but his sin being a public reproach upon the Redeemer's kingdom, private repentance could never be thought a sufficient vindication of the holiness of Christ's laws and interest. Those who sinned before all, were rebuked before all, that others might fear.

SYLLOGIST. Nothing can be more reasonable: the wound such a person gives is a public wound, and he must make a public example in open repentance. And whoever loves Christ, will desire it; whoever has pity upon grieved believers and hardened sinners will be forward to do it; for he can never tell how many he has done harm to; and the very principles of humanity, not to say christianity, will put him upon doing all the justice he can to the name of Christ he has reproached, to the cause he has injured, and to the persons he has stumbled. And I always think that when any appear backward thus to profess repentance for public crimes, they don't repent at all.

PHILAL. We find that when Peter gave public offence, and others following his example dissembled likewise, Paul withstood him to the face, and reprov'd him before them all. Gal. ii. 11, 14. Nor did the apostle John think it his duty to stay and deal privately with Diotrephes, who had so publicly sinned against the brethren, 3 John 9, 10. And unto the Corinthians, the apostle gives no instructions for their private dealing with that notorious public offender. But with my dear **NEOPHYTUS** I desire some particular account of what they went through in the first church at Caerludd in their dealing with public offenders.

EPENETUS. There was among them a person whose

name was *Meddwyn*, who gave them a great deal of trouble, and was like, as a root of bitterness, to defile many. Upon his first profession of christianity, and for a considerable time after he became a church member, he behaved well; but after some years he began to discover too much love to strong liquors, and as that inclination appeared, the brethren and officers of the church gave him all seasonable caution and advice; which he sometimes seemed to take kindly, but at other times it appeared by his countenance that cautions were not very acceptable to him. However, upon a time he drank of *meth-y-glyn* to that excess, that all the symptoms of drunkenness were upon him, and he was led home. Honest *Didwyll* and *Diwyd* the elders hearing of it, went immediately to him, charged his sin upon him, which he could not deny, observed to him many aggravating circumstances attending it, and desired he would the very next church-meeting come, and in the presence of all profess public repentance. He told them he would consider of it; but however, he thought a more private way of dealing with him would bring less reproach upon christianity.

Didwyll. What your concern may be for the reproach of christianity, we cannot tell; and how far christianity is already reproached on your account, you cannot tell; there are thousands of them in your neighbourhood that would very gladly take up any thing they can make use of, to the reproach of your religion. Your sin already is took up in the lips of talkers, report say they, and we'll report it. If they had but the account of your public repentance to report also, it would in some measure, even in their own consciences, justify the laws of our dear Redeemer, and vindicate the church in their holy profession. Christ is injured in his name and interest, his children are grieved, and you must think the haters of godliness are hardened, and their mouths are opened to speak evil of the things they know not; your own conscience must be under guilt, and you must at present dwell at a distance

from true peace in your mind; and unfeigned public repentance appears to be your immediate duty on all accounts.

Meddwyn. So I do repent; I tell you so, and I am willing you should tell the church so, and any persons in the world also; and this I hope will be thought public repentance.

Didwyll. No; whether it's repentance or no, may be a question; but whether it is public or private, is out of question; for we know it is only a private one, and must be so called, when we have done all we can. We can only say that you did tell us in a private way, that you did repent: but the church of Christ whom you have greatly grieved, must in the presence, and according to the laws of their King, judge of these things.

Meddwyn. As I said before, so I say again, I will consider what you say.

Diwyd. I wish you truly may; and I heartily desire you may consider, when you have a cup in hand any more, whether it is lawful and expedient to drink it.

NEOPHYTUS. A good advice; consideration might, rationally speaking, have a good influence upon the morals of men. There are very close questions, proposed to consideration, which relate to this affair: *Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixt wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Prov. xxiii. 29, 30, 31, 32.*

Drink not the third glass, which thou canst not tame
When once it is within thee; but before
May'st rule it as thou list: and pour the skame
Which it will pour on thee, upon the floor.

It is most just to throw that on the ground,
Which would throw me there, if I kept the round.

HERBERT.

THEOPH. Right, my dear NEOPHYTUS, may young and old through the land but duly consider their ways, and thousands of haughty-looking well-fed landlords will be put to consider what business they had best next take up. Excuse us both, good EPENETUS, and proceed.

EPENETUS. However, though he would not promise them, yet at the next church-meeting he was present; and after prayer and exhortation, *Dewi* spoke unto the church as follows:

Dear brethren, through the rich grace of God we have given up ourselves in church-fellowship to our Redeemer, to walk in all his statutes and ordinances blamelessly; and the more we conform to this our holy resolution and engagement, the more our Redeemer is glorified, and the more our true peace, usefulness, comfort, and glory. All sin tends to darken and cloud the mind, and drive us to a distance from the refreshing presence of our Father; and therefore against all appearance of evil are we to strive: but there are some sins that at once lay our glory in the dust, under which we may say, *The crown is fallen from our heads, and woe to us that we have sinned!* Among sins of this kind do I reckon *drunkenness*; and because very few of you do so much as know what it is, you will please to take the following account of it from one who, through the mercy of God, never was drunk in all his life. According to all I can learn of it, the sin stands in drinking liquors of strength to an excessive degree. And though the depraved mind of man may look upon this as a matter of small moment, yet if we take an impartial view of it, we shall find there are horrid aggravations attending it. It is a sin that directly tends to destroy the workmanship of God; for by him are our bodies fearfully and wonderfully made, and noble structures they are, but this sin tends to their destruction; and it clouds and fetters the rational powers of the more noble soul; it is the most horrid abuse of the bounties of Heaven; it is a denying

the eternal God, and putting one's self out of all the way of service to him; ye, it is setting up another God against him; and I doubt not but it was of such the apostle wrote weeping, *who were enemies to the cross of Christ, whose God was their belly, and who gloried in their shame*. Dear brethren, though this sin is a most fearful evil, beyond any thing that tongue can express, there is one present, a member of us, who is guilty of it. The godly may be the song of the drunkards, but what are the drunkards themselves? The Spirit of God says, *Be not deceived—drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God*. It is indeed supposed, that one who is called a brother, may be a drunkard, but then with him, it is said, we must not eat. *Meddwyn*, you are here charged with sin; the horrid nature of the transgression you must consider, and what way is left for you to glorify an offended God, and yet comfort a grieved church. You are desired to speak.

Meddwyn My business leads me into company, and many snares which I can't avoid; and my particular calling is of that nature, that I stand in need now and then of a supporting refreshing draught, but what, and how often, I humbly hope I may be thought the most competent judge. Though I own, that in the step you call me to account for, I have sinned, and I was very sorry the next day, and have been sorry for it ever since; but I can hardly think my crime such an aggravated one as you have expressed it. I do'nt like making the worse of things so; nevertheless a sin it was to be sure, but it is said, that *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, and so I hope I have reason to be easy. I hope I shall take more care for the time to come. I am sure I should watch; for there are many that watch for my halting, though they are not blameless themselves.

Yefan. It must be granted, that drunkenness is a very great sin; denies God and destroys man; and that *Meddwyn* is guilty of it, wants no proof. His inclination has been observed before now, and he has often

been cautioned ; and his breaking through solemn engagements and resolutions, and trampling all friendly cautions under foot, must signify that the vicious depraved appetite in him is very strong : and I am ready to think by his *name* that it may be hereditary to him ; for his ancestors had not the name for nothing. *Meddwyn* is as much as *Meddul wan*, which signifies a man without brains and sense. But though the sin discovers the greatest folly and depravity of mind predominant, yet our God calls for, and encourages repentance. And I am glad to hear *Meddwyn* say, that he was quickly sorry for it, and that he has been sorry for it ever since ; and I heartily wish, this sorrow may manifest itself to be of godly sort. Some things in what he has said, seem to draw a cloud over it ; he lays some fault upon his business and calling, which by consequence lays it at the door of Providence ; much like our first parent, *the woman thou gavest me*. David when he repented, justified God ; and our Lord says, that *wisdom shall be justified of all her children*. Then, he is not willing to grant, that his sin is so great a sin as our dear brother *Dewi* declared it to be : and then, he mentions the blood of Christ as cleansing from all sin, whereupon he says he has reason to be easy ; but I think this is not exactly like that in the promise, *They shall look unto him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one is in bitterness for his first-born*. And lastly, he seems to lay his promised watchfulness for the future upon too narrow a foundation, namely that of others watching for his halting, who themselves are not blameless ; where perhaps he disagreeably resents their discharge of duty, and sinfully recriminates, seemingly with a design to defame ; which things, though I am glad to hear him profess his sorrow, throw me under discouraging thoughts. But that the church may see things in a clearer light, I desire my brethren and fellow-elders to speak their thoughts.

Diwyd. I must own myself greatly pleased with that gentleness and mildness our honored teacher always discovers; but I humbly conceive that the sin of *drunkenness* deserves to be treated with some degree of warmth and indignation: I don't mean indignation against any man's person, but against his crime; and that we may approve ourselves clear in this matter, I think a becoming zeal should be discovered. A drunkard wrongs himself; a drunkard wrongs others: provides not for his family, makes himself worse than an infidel. A drunkard fights against God; turns his own mercies against him; a drunkard denies God; a drunkard sets up another God; spreads infection, and carries all manner of destruction with him wherever he goes. A sin, for which tender parents were to deliver up their child to deserved death, themselves being evidences against him. Drunkards were esteemed children of Belial. Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim: strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it; and though they may at present flatter themselves that they shall have peace though they add drunkenness to their thirst, yet we are well assured they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Drunkenness is a work of the flesh; it is one of the works of darkness, and upon those whose hearts are overcharged therewith, the great day shall come unawares. And as for this member of ours, I don't see that his repentance bears any proportion to his crime. He says he is sorry, and I believe he is sorry that 'tis known; but how 'tis with him as to true repentance for his sin, as so great a sin against God, I must confess myself an incompetent judge; I hope our King whom we serve will guide his church in judgment. I take it as a rebuke from God upon us, that he should suffer a trial of this nature to attend us: and I think he calls upon us to mourn, and consider his controversy with us. If he had sent the pestilence amongst us, we should have mourned under the rebuking rod: for my part, I look upon this to be worse; and if God

should suffer the infection to spread, which God forbid, must be attended with worse consequences. And be it known to ages to come, that wherever this iniquity prevails, the kingdom of God is departing, or already departed from that people. I am not against receiving the true repentance of any person; but as I cannot see it in *Meddwyn*, who is yet a member with us, I know of no step more proper for us to take, than immediately, in the name of Christ, to separate him from us.

Gruffudd, another of the elders, said, Dear brethren, I cannot sufficiently admire the grace of God to our dear brother *Diwyd*, in filling him with such zeal against sin; certainly those who love the Lord should hate evil. Sin is the abominable thing that God's soul hateth, and all who profess christianity should be followers of God as dear children. And is it possible to do so, without fervent love to every duty? Can we follow the Lord without indignation against all appearance of evil? I bless God for our brother, I bless God for his zeal. But with submission, I think that in following the Lamb, there are also other virtues of Christ that we are to shew forth. I don't say, that our zeal against sin should in the least be abated, but we must see that we discover towards all men that pity, and those compassions, which will always be attended with kindness, long-suffering, and unwearied endeavours, in the use of all appointed means, to recover and restore a backslider. Without this we can never make a due representation of the bowels and compassions of our merciful and faithful High-Priest; yea, without this we can never convince others that we consider how it is, and how it may be with ourselves. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* Has the brother sinned? It is granted he has greatly sinned; but in the spirit of meekness let us attempt his recovery. Does he seem far short of a true sense of his

crime, and the aggravating circumstances attending it? Let us endeavour to make him truly sensible of all. Does there any thing like repentance appear in him? Let us bless God for that, and encourage it. If we do but diligently observe our Father's name, word, and work, we shall see the path we should walk in pointed out for us. If any person who has sinned appears impenitent, let us use the appointed means to bring him to repentance. If, after waiting in the diligent use of all means, the person appears obstinate, we must, though with becoming reluctance, use the last remedy to preserve ourselves pure. But if the person repents, who are we, to reject whom God receives! I don't say, that the repentance of this brother amounts to satisfaction; but he says he is sorry: and if we think that his repentance bears no proportion to his sin, let us endeavour to bring it up thereto, by admonishing him in our Lord's name, and praying for him to the God of all grace. But immediate separation I think not advisable.

Addfwyn, another ruling elder, spoke as follows: Brethren, I most readily grant, that with regard unto sins and offences in general, there is a great deal in what our beloved brother *Gruffudd* in a few words delivered to us, and every sentence has its weight. But as in most cases, so in this, particular exceptions will attend general rules. The Lord himself, in the dispensations of his providence, does not treat all offenders alike. And though churches, as well as particular christians, should appear very compassionate, yet in all they must act with *discretion*, according to an express rule, *And of some have compassion, making a difference*. In some cases, persons must be dealt with privately, first by one, then by one or two more, before the affair must be brought to the church; but we are sure, that some offences require an immediate public consideration. The man that is an *heretic* indeed, should, after the first and second admonition, be rejected; but where is it said, The man that is a drunkard,

after the first and second admonition reject? We are sure it is said, that with such an one we should not eat; which if it intends, we should not be free with him in common food, then it must hold much stronger that we should not eat with him at the Lord's table; and if we must not eat with him at the Lord's table, then I humbly conceive he must be no church-member; for I suppose, all church-members have a right to that ordinance, and it cannot be denied them: therefore if we must not eat with him, he must not remain a member with us. I don't see that in case of gross immoralities, and I look upon drunkenness to be a sin that deserves that name, we have any rules given us to proceed gradually by admonition; the Corinthians were not directed to use any such methods with the incestuous person, but immediately *put him away* from among themselves: and the same rule they are to observe towards any man who is called a brother, and is a drunkard. And I think it is impossible to vindicate the honor of Christ our King, maintain the reputation of his holy institutions, shew our just indignation against such gross evils, preserve our communion pure, deliver ourselves and posterity from dangerous infection, and give all mankind a true idea of the kingdom, laws, and subjects of our Redeemer, without this.

Didwyl. Dear brethren, I hope I shall never be an advocate for iniquity, nor once open my mouth in vindication of sin; and drunkenness I look upon to be a very great one; and I desire we, and succeeding ages, may be continually on the strictest guard against it. So far as it enters and prevails, christianity is defiled and departs. And indeed there is no matter what religion drunkards may be of, for their God is their belly; and though they may deal in many words, one and the same is their worship. But with regard to the present case under consideration; granting unto our brethren that drunkards should be immediately separated from a church of Christ, I cannot see it our duty, as yet, to grant, that he of whom we speak, who is

called a brother with us, is proved to be a drunkard. That he has been guilty of drunkenness we own, nor does he deny it; but must he from thence be denominated a drunkard? Can one single transient act, enter the description of a man's general character? If a man is overtaken with a fault, must he for ever after be denominated thereby? Was Noah a drunkard? Was Jacob a liar? Was David an adulterer? Was Peter a dissembler? God forbid. Not, but that their sins were very great sins, and the greater because they were the sins of such persons; but yet they were not to be denominated from those sinful acts of theirs. If they were, pray what name must we give to righteous Lot? Yea, to Abraham, the father of the faithful! Let this man appear obstinate, or refuse to reform, before we fix his character. I grant his sin is a very gross sin; but I am greatly mistaken if it is not our immediate duty to do all we can to bring him to true repentance. The sorrow he has expressed, perhaps may not be satisfactory; but how can we honor Christ, or how can we serve our poor fellow-sinner in a better way, than in the use of proper means to bring him to that repentance not to be repented of? Don't we thereby glorify our King? maintain the purity of his laws? testify against sin? deliver ourselves from defilement? shew pity to him who gave the offence? and testify to all the world that our Lord is holy and gracious, and that we are followers of him? I would willingly submit to all instruction; but as yet I cannot see it the duty of a church of Christ, immediately to separate any offender from their fellowship without previous admonitions and calls to repentance, if the church can conveniently use such means. The judgment of our honored pastor and teacher upon this I humbly desire.

Dewi. It is most certainly the duty of a church of Christ to stand up for Christ their King, and for the holiness and purity of his laws and institutions to the uttermost, against all sin, and all appearance of it. But this must be according to his revealed pleasure,

and not after any private fancies of their own; other-ways while they are seemingly engaged against one sin, they are insensibly entering into another. I cannot learn that church-dealings with offenders are properly of a punishing vindictive nature, but corrective and instructive: the sole end whereof, with respect whereunto from divine institution they have their efficacy, being the repentance and the recovery of the offender. And certainly, according to all that is written, by such a repentance, Christ is more glorified than by any sudden and warm rejection of the offender from fellowship: and therefore in the first place to be desired, and in the use of means sought after. If found to reject such a person, would be to oppose Christ who receives him, and publicly declare in Christ's name, what is not in Christ's heart. Christ most certainly approves the penitent person, and the church by excluding him testifies he does not; which must be a very unjust representation of the Redeemer. But if upon examination and the use of means repentance cannot be discovered, the church must separate such from among themselves, either with greater speed, or in the exercise of more patience, as after seeking God's face, and due consultation, they may think necessary.

Yefan. I am in the same mind with my dear brother *Dewi*, being thoroughly persuaded that nothing is to be sought after by a church of Christ, so much as the glory of Christ, and that nothing among poor sinners gives more glory to Christ, than a looking to him whom they have pierced, and mourning. True repentance with reformation glorifies Christ, preserves the church pure, and maintains the wisdom, equity, and holiness of Christ's institutions before all the world of angels and men. But whether the church is to seek such repentance in all cases, by a first and by a second formal admonition, I determine not: only I think it is a safe path to walk in, when we can come at it, because in one case it is expressly given us, and forbidden in none. And therefore, *Meddwyn*, if you can

give us some further account of your repentance, I pray you now to do it.

Meddwyn. Why sir, I said that I am sorry; and so I am very sorry, and I think that is repentance; and I desire I may do so no more; this has been much trouble of mind to me.

Dewi. Now dear brethren, I must put it to you as a church of Christ, here are set thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David. We have referred our minds unto him, and I trust he will guide them aright; if you do, as a church of Christ, judge *Meddwyn's* repentance to be evangelical and satisfactory, signify it by lifting up your hands. Which no person did,

Then said *Dewi*, You that think it our duty to proceed immediately to cut him off, signify it by lifting up your hands. Which two of the elders and several more did.

Then said *Dewi*, You that think it our duty to admonish him, and call him to due and unfeigned repentance for his great evil in drinking unto drunkenness, signify it by lifting up your hands. Which the pastor, the teacher, and the other two ruling elders did, together with a great majority of the church.

Then said *Dewi* to the church, You see brethren how the Lord Jesus determines the minds of the majority, this we take to be his mind; and as in all cases, so in this, the cheerful concurrence of the minority is now their duty and their glory; wherefore, if you do as a church of Christ admonish *Meddwyn*, and call him to evangelical repentance for the great sin of drunkenness whereof he has been guilty, and to a reformation and close walk with God for the future, signify it by lifting up your hands. Which they *unanimously* did.

Then said *Dewi* unto *Meddwyn*, You hear the voice of the church, yea, the voice of Christ by the church. Though you say you are sorry, and repent, your repentance meets with no acceptance: we are all afraid

it is not with you as it should be ; admonished you are, called to repentance and reformation you are ; and I hope we shall pray for you, and wait to see you bring forth fruit, meet for repentance. Desire earnestly of God to fill you with his Spirit, give you true repentance not to be repented of, and watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation. This is what we have to say to you at this time.

Upon this a godly brother of the church stands up, and submissively asks leave to speak a few words ; which being granted by the elders, he spoke as follows :

I desire with submission to know how I am to carry it towards this admonished person, and perhaps several more may want to know this as well as I. He is yet a member with us, our honored elder *Addfwyn* said, that every member has a right to the Lord's supper, an undeniable right ; and I think if it is so, he has a right to our nearest and most intimate fellowship, and we shall do him wrong if we withdraw from him in the least. We must be as free and as pleasant with him as ever ; for he that has a right to the greatest and the nearest instance of fellowship, surely has a right to all the rest. And as the case stands with him, I cannot find freedom for this, but I humbly desire instruction.

Yefan. What our dear brother *Addfwyn* said, holds true in general, but there may be some exceptions. We know that our children are church-members with us in their nonage, but unto the Lord's supper they are not admitted, till in an orderly way they confess their faith in Christ, and declare what he has done for their souls. If any one of them should without this thrust himself to the table, and demand the bread and wine as his right, we should think it our duty to exclude him. And though *Meddwyn's* case is not exactly the same with theirs, yet certainly it is of that nature, that according to general and discretionary rules, such as, *let all things be done to edification*, and *all things decently and in order*, he should not for the present be admitted to the Lord's table. And besides,

there are some particular rules that seem to touch his case. He has not in the judgment of the church cleared himself from being a drunkard: they could not receive his repentance as full and unfeigned; and therefore, seeing he is yet called a brother, it is expressly said, that with him we must not eat. And again, we are commanded to withdraw ourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed, still not counting him as an enemy, but admonishing him as a brother; which I am certain must suppose that admonished members are not to be admitted to the highest communion, for they are hardly to be admitted to the lowest, that they may be ashamed; to admit them higher, would be the ready way to harden them. And therefore I declare to *Meddwyn*, that until the church has received satisfaction in his repentance, to the Lord's table he must not come. In the mean time, you're all to pray for him, and have no fellowship with him, but what calls him to repentance.

Addfwyn. My honored teacher, I thank you for this, and I thank the brother that put the case to you; this has informed my judgment, and took a very great burden off my mind.—Then was the meeting concluded in prayer.

CHRISTOPHILUS. I thank ye, dear EPHENETUS, for this account; I see though the church met with a grieving trial, they were helped under it, to manifest the virtues of their Redeemer. Their love to Christ, their zeal for his honor, their obedience to his laws, their hatred against sin, their compassion towards the sinner, their love to each other, and the cheerful concurrence of the minority, without wrangling and displeasure, made the whole beautiful. What a sight was this! the elders in all gravity and wisdom going before the flock, reasoning without interrupting each other upon the concerns of the day, in some things seemingly of different apprehensions without any the least resentment; liberty unto any brother upon leave and in

order to deliver his thoughts, and whatever so delivered tenderly regarded; the laws of their Redeemer observed in all, and his blessing desired upon all. I should esteem this the most glorious sight this side heaven.

NEOPHYTUS. Indeed I think so too: but in some church-meetings I have seen the minority hang the head, and look surly and displeased; and I have seen some of them sometimes go away in a disgust, with indignation in their countenances, which they always called *grief*; but I seldom or never saw any of them act with the church. Such things and others of a like nature, have unto me greatly clouded the glory of church-assemblies.

THEOPH. Most of the churches in our day are attended with such clouds; but they proceed not from him that calleth them: God is not the author of confusion. According to the wisdom of our blessed Redeemer in his laws, there is provision made for the constant peace and tranquillity of the churches, and their several members, under the variety of sentiments and attainments which in their imperfect state must attend them. There is but one great enemy, which, under many names and forms, deceives and distresses them, and that is *self*. Self-wisdom, self-will, and self-sufficiency defile and tarnish all gospel-glory, so far as they prevail.

SYLLOGIST. Christ has promised his presence to a church of his, meeting in his name: all the members of a congregational church profess this. Christ, we humbly hope, his face being sought, guides this church in wisdom according to his word. All reason tells us, the majority must be the church; and then, all reason in the world, the minority should cheerfully concur.

NEOPHYTUS. But there was a concern among them, I find, which I should be glad to understand a little better. It was well indeed they cheerfully concurred in what they did, but there were among them some, of which two were elders, who were for cutting off the

offender immediately without previous admonitions, and endeavours to bring him to repentance. Pray is it necessary or lawful to cut off any so?

PHILAL. Surely it is neither lawful nor expedient to serve a true penitent so, whatever his crime has been. The Lord Jesus Christ, by his Spirit of grace, steps in between the person, and such a censure. He is lead by the Spirit of Christ, to look to Christ, whom he has pierced: he is made to mourn in bitterness before him; he loaths and abhors himself in his own sight; he bemoans himself under a sense of his exceeding sinfulness; he lies at the Redeemer's feet, and has a recourse to the blood of sprinkling; and as his offence may be public, he desires his acknowledgment may be so, to the glory of Christ, his own shame, and the instruction of others; Christ receives him graciously, and says, that he will in no wise cast him out: pray what has any church of Christ in the world to do, to reject him? What representation can they make of Christ and his will in it? And if they bind him, how can they once think that such a person is bound in heaven? No, let him profess his repentance, and let them follow their Lord. But if the person does not appear unto them fully restored, let them use all the means they can to restore him in the spirit of meekness. But I grant there may be some cases, wherein a cutting off may be thought expedient, without the mentioned previous endeavours.

NEOPHYTUS. I hope one of my dear friends present will favor me with some account of them.

SYLLOGIST. When and where a church is well satisfied, that a member of theirs is guilty of immoralities, upon presumptive circumstances strong and convincing; the crimes of such a nature, and the evidence of such sort, as that thereby a public examination is rendered inexpedient and reproachful; and the guilty person wiping the mouth as one that had not sinned; common discretion will there call for an immediate procedure.

Also, when persons charged with sin withdraw to great distances, or put themselves out of the way of admonitions, they must needs know the church must proceed against them immediately.

And also where no true repentance does immediately evidence itself, there may be some uncommon circumstances attending some enormous crimes which may, for ought I know, justly incline a church to excommunication. Though in granting such a thing as this, in some places *inconveniencies* have occurred, where persons of conceit have assumed a disagreeable power of dictating whose sins were to be treated thus, and whose were not, as the persons stood in or out of their favor. And therefore, if it be possible, the ordinary path, by previous admonitions, is the safest.

NEOPHYTUS. I am thankful to you, my dear friends; if the freedom wherewith you are pleased to indulge me, makes me at any time over-troublesome and impertinent, I hope my wise and worthy friend THEOPHILUS will, as he knows how, reprove my imprudencies.

THEOPH. Hey-day, my NEOPHYTUS, is this sarcastically spoke? or a pleasant diverting turn of a juvenile fancy? or do you in earnest chuse me for your guardian? But be it what it will, perhaps I may take occasion to make use of the freedom wherewith you are pleased to indulge me, sir. You will excuse my returning your own words; for words, as well as things, not well digested, will rise again.

CHRISTOPH. How pleasant and merry my neighbours! But I desire that our beloved EPHENETUS would please to proceed in the story of the admonished person.

EPHENETUS. Why a great many things spoke in the church-meeting stuck very close to him, he thought his sin might be greater than he imagined, but was very willing to hope it was not so heinous as the elders described it. When he thought that his sin might be truly great, he seemed under some humility of mind, to think the church was in their duty, and did him

justice. When thoughts that his sins were not so very great prevailed, then he judged and slighted the church and its elders, as persons that had done him injury, disaffected towards him, and prejudiced against him. When his mind was possessed with these thoughts, he was careless in his walk, and often ready to run into the way of that sin, for which the church admonished him: but when any sense of the greatness of his sin took hold of him, then his walk was more careful, and some inclination to duty discovered. He was visited by some of the elders and brethren, who endeavoured to fasten upon him a becoming sense of the greatness of his sin, the reproach he brought upon the gospel, and the grief which the godly on his account were under. They insisted on the love of Christ, the design of his death, and the grace of his Spirit; they prayed with him, and for him; and prevailed upon him to think that all their concern with him and for him, sprung from love to him: not love to his sin, but pity to his person, and earnest desires to see him not only healed and restored in his soul; but brought to and established in a brighter and a more useful walk than ever.

CHRISTOPH. Well, he could not say that no man cared for his soul; they have certainly their lines fallen to them in pleasant places, who are planted in churches carefully walking in the order, and according to the rules of the gospel: where the members exhort one another daily, lest any among them be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. With grief of heart have I beheld some godly persons keeping themselves out of full fellowship with a church of Christ, and for reasons insufficient have all their days wandered at a distance from that usefulness, comfort, and service, they seemed very capable to receive and go through. Blessed be God for church-fellowship, notwithstanding some trials wherewith the churches in their militant state must be attended! But I have interrupted you; pray how did the man go on?

EPENETUS. This seemed to have a very good effect upon him, he abstained from all appearance of the evil, he kept out of the way of temptation, and appeared mighty thankful unto his friends for their care over him, and their love to him, went to visit them, kept to their private meetings, prayed with them, and mourned much with tears, under a sense of his evil, and the brethren were greatly pleased with him; and ere he was aware, he began to be too much pleased with himself, and by little and little dropped his watchfulness, and a day or two before the next church-meeting, in some measure fell unto the same sin again.

THEOPH. Oh, the very thoughts of this grieve me! What a precious prospect there was of the man's recovery, had it not been for that spiritual pride which insensibly invaded his heart! Our blessed Lord's advice is always seasonable, *What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch; and watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.* But how went it at the church-meeting?

EPENETUS. Why truly his legs would hardly carry him thither; his heart was much shut up; it could not be said of him, that his heart did fear and was enlarged; but it was slavishly disposed and straitened, ready to hide itself from God and man too; and the man had not those truly mean thoughts of himself, nor those respectful thoughts of his Redeemer's kingdom, as once he seem'd to have; but however to the church-meeting he came. And after prayer and exhortation, and hearing some relations of God's convincing converting work, *Yefan* spoke to him as follows:

Brother, I am glad to see you here, and am glad to hope that this day in Zion you will give glory to the Redeemer. It is with a great deal of pleasure I have heard several of the brethren relate the merciful dealings of God with your soul, and thankful I have been to our God for owning our poor endeavours for your spiritual advantage. Though backslidings from God are evil and bitter, they are not things unknown in Israel: it was complained of a professing people, for-

merly, that they were bent to backslide. We can never be thankful enough, brother, for the grace, the free sovereign grace of God, held forth in that promise, *I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely.* It was upon experience of the power of that grace that David sang the praises of the Lord his shepherd, who restored his soul: and so valuable and precious a mercy was soul-restoration to him, that he set a great value upon all the means God made use of to bring it about; and though no affliction can seem joyous, he said it was good for him that he was afflicted; for before he was afflicted he went astray. I doubt not, by all that I have heard, but now you set a value upon the means of your recovery, and bless the Redeemer for them, and for making use of them. For whatever means he makes use of, or whatever methods he takes, the recovery of a poor backslider is his own work. It is he that worketh in us both to will and to perform of his own good pleasure. Our sins proceed from ourselves, we fall by our iniquity, but our recovery is wholly from God. He is Jehovah that healeth us, and may we for ever bless his name who forgiveth all our iniquities, and healeth all our diseases. Now you are desired to bear your public testimony against your sin, and for the grace of God to his glory and our comfort.

Meddwyn. I don't know what to say; I am at a great loss: I do not justify myself; I have sinned without doubt, and as I said before, I am sorry for it. I know that in many things we offend all, some more one way, some more another; and perhaps in this way I may sin more than some others, but I do confess it, and do repent for it; and God forgiveth iniquity, transgression, and sin, and I hope he forgiveth my sin, and this is all I think I can say.

Yefan. I am amazed! What is the matter! Did not you brother *Gruffydd* tell me of brokenness, of tears, of self loathing, and a great sense? Did not you tell me how he bemoaned himself, how he abhorred

the sin, and hated the snares, and admired the grace of God in dealing so mercifully with his soul, who had so sinned against light and knowledge, and was, after repeated friendly cautions, guilty of such an aggravated provocation? Sure this is not all you meant thereby?

Gruffudd. No, sir; nor hardly any part of it. What I told you was to the best of my knowledge strictly true; and there are others who were eye and ear-witnesses of the same encouraging tokens of unfeigned repentance; but what is the matter now, I am as great a stranger to as yourself. If any brother present can give any account of it, he is desired to stand up and declare what he knows; unless *Meddwyn* himself pleases to give us some further account of his case.

Meddwyn. No, I shall say no more than what I have said; I have said, I do repent; and Christ says, If he says *I repent*, thou shalt forgive him.

Upon this, a brother stands up and says, Upon the call of our honored elder, I think it my duty to declare what I heard as I came along to the meeting this day; a person who is a well-wisher to us, told me, that he saw *Meddwyn* drunk very lately.

Dewi. I desire you would, *Meddwyn*, tell us the very truth, whether it was so or no.

Meddwyn. I don't think I was drunk, though perhaps I drank more than did me good. I knew what I said and did well enough.

Dewi. Dear brethren, we have very great reason to humble ourselves before our heavenly Father, who for wise ends suffers a trial of this nature to lie upon us. Our endeavours are blasted, our expectations are disappointed, our souls may consider all as a controversy our Father hath with us. Perhaps in times past we have not carried it towards this member of ours, as we ought to have done. And, as he has put us in mind, in many things we offend all: let this be for our humiliation before God; and let us see what we should further learn from this trial, bitter as it is, and think what may be our duty under it. We see that he that

standeth should take heed, lest he fall; for the very entrance of sin, is like the breaking forth of waters, where a small stream prepares the way for a flood. Some few years ago, this member of ours would not have believed that the time was a coming, when he should, to the great grief of the church, thus appear bound with the cords of his own sins, if the wisest and dearest of his friends had told him so: and perhaps a week or two ago, when those encouraging tokens of repentance attended, he would not have believed that another fall was so near at hand. But dangerous it is to drop christian watchfulness; dangerous it is to be pleased with ourselves, and trust our own hearts in the least. Oh pity and pray for your poor fellow-member, who stands here amongst you, ensnar'd, entangled, and bound! His deliverance is what we earnestly desire, and we are in the use of means to attain this, if our dear Lord pleases to command the blessing. You have as a church of Christ admonished him once, and if you do now in the name of Christ your King admonish him the second time, and call him to repentance and reformation, signify it by lifting up your hands. Which they unanimously did. And *Dewi* desired *Meddwyn* to take notice of it; and desired the brethren to take that notice of him, which was most consistent with their duty.

Yefan. Brethren, there is one thing I must at present take notice of. Our admonished brother mentioned that word of Christ, *If he says, I repent, thou shalt forgive him*: implying, that what he said, should be looked upon by the church as sufficient. But I must observe, that a public notorious immorality is vastly different from a private personal offence, which our Lord there treats of. Besides, the words were not fairly repeated; our Lord says, *if he repent*; and then, *if he turn to thee*; which expressions denote a true open hearty sincere repentance; which will always be for making all the *reparation* possible. And there is no body in the world, that does really repent, who

will abuse the words and meaning of our Saviour, and with a deriding face say, I am sorry, what would you have me say more? it is written, *If he says he repents, thou shalt forgive him.*

Then, some time being spent in prayer, bemoaning themselves under their non-success; begging the blessing of God on this second admonition, and any more private endeavours that might be yet used for the recovery of the backslider, the meeting concluded.

CHRISTOPH. They bemoan themselves who had but one trial of this kind! What must we think of those poor enfeebled churches and servants of Christ in our day, where trials of this nature abound! Where the *hell-houses* multiply, and those who are masters of them are cloathed in fine linen, and fare deliciously every day, and many of those on whom they *wait*, as they call it, have hardly decent rags to cover them. Their debts abroad, so far as they can be trusted, unpaid; with glaring eyes, and glowing cheeks, some with heavy eye-lids and falling jaws, others calling for the t'other pot, as plain as they can speak, and what's to pay; and when they have stumbled home, chide their half-starved families for doing no more. A person I knew heard a young fellow say, that he worked in a shop, where no body's true acquaintance with religion must be so much a questioned, where he was obliged continually every day to spend his three farthings an hour all day long, which in a twelve month's time, is very near twelve pounds, and half that money he was not worth in the world. But such as could better afford it, though it be at last upon other people's cost, must have their extraordinary draughts in the day, and the refreshing club at night besides, to fit them for bed. And yet all this must be called a sober way of living. The good people of Caerludd sure never thought that Britain would prove a stage for such people to act such an inglorious part upon. Now it is high time for the churches to mourn; for the land to mourn: for such locusts, caterpillars and canker-

worms are very like, unless wonderful amazing grace prevents, to render all desolate.

NEOPHYTUS. Oh CHRISTOPHILUS, you do so sink my spirit, that I have hardly life left in me! Oh for something more refreshing! Pray, EPENETUS, go on with your story; and may I forget this.

EPENETUS. The admonished person seemed very much displeased with the church, nor was he well pleased with himself; there was nothing pleased him. He could think but of one way to make himself easy, and that was to forget all; and there was but one way to forget all, and that was to make himself drunk, and keep himself so. A desperate temptation which he was just entering into; and as he was upon going out of his own house upon this dreadful design, an honest godly brother of the church came to visit him; and told him that he was come to see him upon a christian religious design, but he was afraid he came at an unseasonable time, for he apprehended that he was going out. Ay, says the other, so I was; but my business is not so urgent, but I can stay, and will stay, now you are come, Upon this, that brother says, whose name was

Porthwyol. Some hours before I came hither, I was thinking of several parables spoke by our great Shepherd; that of the woman searching for the lost piece of money, and rejoicing when she found it; and that of the man leaving his ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness, and going after the one that went astray, and searching till he found it, then carrying it home with joy; and of the prodical's return, and when his father saw him afar off, he ran to meet him, fell upon his neck, and kissed him, and his joy was very great. Upon that, with many tears I thought of you, and I found love and pity towards you, and earnest desires after your recovery out of the snares of the tempter, and the power of your own corruption, and a strong inclination of soul, to aim at some service that way. But many discouragements immediately seized me.

I thought I was weak and utterly insufficient for any work of that kind; and I thought I was sinful and unworthy to be honored with any such service; and I thought if I attempted it, I should only by an unseasonable unwise attempt, offend you, and put you more out of the way of repentance. But still I could not rest, went to prayer, and desired direction of God, and several gracious words of scripture encouraged me; and among others, that we should exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, lest any of us be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. I saw that though I was no minister, I was called to exhort my fellow-member, when and where I thought exhortation was wanting; I saw it must be done without delay, and done as the case required every day; I saw that sin was deceitful and of hardening nature, and therefore immediately to be guarded against; so I sent up my desires to God for success, and hither I am come; and before we proceed any further, will you give me leave to go to prayer with you?

Meddwyn. Yes, with all my heart: but let us go into a convenient room.

Upon this, having entered the room, and made the door safe, they both fell down before the Lord, and *Porthwyol* prayed under a more than ordinary gale of the spirit of prayer. He mourned, he cried, he confessed, he petitioned, he pleaded, with many tears, and his mouth was filled with arguments; the recovery, oh the recovery of his poor fellow-member, bound with the cords of his own sins, and led captive, he earnestly sought, and unto mercy he appealed.

THEOPH. Ay; this is like primitive christianity indeed! this is following the Lamb, making a representation of the compassions and bowels of a merciful Redeemer, and discharging the duty which necessarily belongs to brotherly love. Come *NEOPHYTUS*, I hope you'll hear something quickly of a reviving nature.

EPENETUS. Prayer being over, they got up; and

after some time, *Porthwyol* says, Come, my poor tempted, prevailed-upon, and ensnared friend and brother, I hope that according to our Lord's will, I came this day to seek after you; and as I came along, I was hoping the hand of our Redeemer was in it; let me know, if you can, how it is with you: for in search of you I am come.

Meddwyn. If you had staid but a little longer, you had found me in the way of death and darkness; no body can tell how it has been with me, a poor tempted ensnared sinner. I heard of temptation many a time, but I never knew what it was to lie under it till now. Every part of me entangled and bound, even my very *judgment*: not able to consider persons nor things in the same light as heretofore. And my *will*, which I thought had been thorough for God, alienated from him, and inclined to the ways that lead unavoidably to destruction. And into those ways I was actually going to seek for rest when you came; for I thought I could never be easy without forgetting myself, and every body else; and I thought nothing could bring that about but *drunkenness*, upon which I was resolved. But blessed be God that ever you came! I look upon you as a messenger mercifully sent from God. I take it as his mercy, and it melts me; and I take it as your kindness, and love you. When you entered my door, it struck me; I knew the design I was upon, and immediately I thought God knew it, and was now in his providence going to disappoint me. Your speaking of the lost sheep, entered my heart, and the prodical's reception in measure stuck to my soul: but when in prayer you mentioned Christ's loosing the person bound by Satan, and that he came to preach liberty to the captives in every sense, and the opening the prison-doors to them that are bound; I thought I felt my cords a breaking, and my soul in measure relieved. I am amazed that I am not in a public-house drunk; I am amazed that I am here mourning before the God of pardons. I am amazed at this mercy!

Blessed be God for salvation! Blessed be God for the church, and their dealing with me! And blessed be God for you, brother, and for this day's work. I hope I shall never forget this,

NEOPHYTUS. No, nor I neither, I think. Dear, how 'twas! One man could not stay at home, the tempter drove him; the other man could not stay at home, God sent him to disappoint the devices of Satan! What a deliverance was here! and what honor was this, God put upon a poor servant of his! He was tempted to stay at home, as the other was to go abroad; but God helped him to overcome, and blessed him with success. Come dear EPENETUS, let's have more of it.

EPENETUS. Upon this, *Meddwyn* went to prayer, and mourned much before the Lord, bemoaned himself as one ashamed and confounded; owned his original corruption, his actual transgressions, and in a very particular manner confessed and bewailed his late aggravated provocations; earnestly desired unfeigned evangelical repentance, not to be repented of; to the glory of Christ, the comfort of his grieved church, and the instruction of all; and that he might be kept for ever from sin and snares, and be enabled in faith and holiness to walk with the Lord, and with his people to the very last. He also with great affection and many tears, blessed God, that prevented the hellish purpose he had took up that day, and graciously sent his servant to speak to him and pray with him; abounded in thankfulness for Christ, the redemption through his blood, and for the Holy Spirit and his gracious operations, and earnestly desired he might yet partake of his consolations, though he deserved nothing but the greatest distance from all comfort for ever.

After this they spent some hours together in christian conversation, and could not tell well how to part; but at last, in the dearest love they took leave of each other, and *Meddwyn* promised to visit *Porthwyol* the next day at such an hour.

Porthwyol could not go home, without acquainting

one of the elders and several of the brethren with what he had seen and heard that day; and told them that the admonished brother would be at his house next day at such an hour. And so he was, and there were they to meet him; and when they heard him speak of what God had done for him, it was like receiving him from the dead. They prayed, they wept, they mourned, they rejoiced together; it was an instructing reviving time to them all. They all longed for the church-meeting day, and so did the admonished brother especially. In the mean time christain visits were frequent, and the work of God continued bright.

THEOPH. So when God gave repentance, he was not backward to own it. I have indeed always suspected those persons, who are seemingly more ashamed to repent than they are to sin. But pray, give us some account of the next church meeting.

EPENETUS. The day came, and God's face being sought, and proper exhortations given, and some necessary work that pertained to the kingdom of heaven gone through, *Dewi* spoke as follows:

Dear brethren, a great part of our business, while on our pilgrimage towards glory, is to give thanks to our God and Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. But though we are through grace in this kingdom of light, we are not got beyond all adversities: and there are adversaries many. We wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. Our present state is militant, the armour of God we have on, and the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Precious the armour, glorious

the cause, and sure is the victory: for the shout of a King is amongst us. But let not the saints sleep as others do: the careless are often carried into captivity. Let us be sober and vigilant, for our adversary the devil goeth up and down like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour: but let us resist him stedfastly in the faith. He broke in upon us, and carried into captivity one of our brethren: but, in the name and strength of him who led captivity captive, we put on our armour, and in all zeal and faithfulness have endeavoured to recover him out of the snare. We have been repulsed, but we hope our Captain of salvation has prevailed. I say, we hope so; and our poor ensnared brother is here amongst us this day, to give some account of what he has passed through, and of the tender gracious arm of our Redeemer that was put forth for his relief. Brother, you are desired to speak.

Meddwyn. My honored and beloved fathers and brethren; it is no honor to you to be so called by such a person as I am, therefore forgive me that I should take such words in my mouth; it was unfeigned affection and respect that put me upon it, though I am not worthy to be among your hired servants. I have reason indeed to say to the Lord, *Forgive mine iniquity, for it is great*: and to smite on my breast with the poor publican, and say, *Lord be merciful unto me a sinner*. I have sinned against light and knowledge, and against innumerable mercies; I have dishonored God, I have made his enemies blaspheme, I have grieved the godly, I have hindered the work of the kingdom, I have stumbled many, I have gratified the devil, and turned aside after Satan; I have hardened my own heart, I have trampled upon and despised the means of my recovery. Oh, dear children of God, have pity upon me! No body can tell what I have done. I have rebelled and vexed the Holy Spirit of God; and it is amazing grace that I was not struck down into eternal death and darkness! It is wonderful grace that I am here this day to tell you something how it has been,

and how it is with me. The entrance of this sin upon me was by little and little; and as it entered, I was struck with some concern of mind, but I always thought I would go but little farther; I began to be general and cold in prayer, and had very little heart for it at all; I began to withdraw in my affection from the godly, and especially the most serious; and began to take pleasure in the *drier* sort; and in other vain persons, so long as they would but refrain from bold and open blasphemy: and I must say, that the company of a brother present, has been some sort of a snare to me; not that I have any thing to charge brother *Cadarn* with, for I never saw him drunk in my life; yet, some how or other, through my fault, his company has been a snare unto me. But alas: I had my snares within me wherever I went, and as I gave way unto them they grew upon me, till at last I was covered all over, a lawful captive, a prey in the hands of the mighty. In tender love you edeavoured my recovery, for which I bless God and thank you; but though I owned I had sinned, my heart nevertheless was shut against God, and against you; and that you perceived; and as a church of Christ, admonished me. Which admonition, together with the private endeavours of faithful tender-hearted brethren, was blest as I thought, and others thought, for my recovery. And indeed there was a great change without, and a great change within; and I, like a fool, trusted my own heart, was vastly pleased with myself, and my conquest over my corruption; and carelessness entered my heart, and I turned like the dog to his vomit, and the washed sow to her wallowing in the mire. Here shame of a slavish kind, guilt, and hardness entered my heart, shut me up against all impressions of law or gospel, and against all your godly endeavours for my recovery. Upon your second admonition, I was filled and possessed with something of so disagreeable a nature, that my flesh trembles to think on't. Displeased with God and with you, displeased with myself,

and displeased with all the world; uneasy, uneasy, and how to come at ease I could not tell; I never thought then of Christ's easy yoke, nor of the rest of soul enjoyed under it, but I was resolved to get myself drunk, and keep myself so, that I might forget every thing that was a burden to me: and as I was going to put this horrid resolution into practice,—you, dear servants and children of God, see to what a dreadful precipice Satan and my own corruptions had led me, from whence I was to have been thrown down head-long; but I say, just as this was going to be done, God sent a brother of the church to keep me back. He talked to me of the lost sheep, and of the prodical; he prayed over my bonds, and earnestly, with very many tears, desired the Redeemer, who came to preach liberty to the captives, to set me free; and I thought I felt my cords dissolving; I found love to Christ and his church reviving, and I began to be filled with hatred to my sin, and I loathed myself. The particulars of this I have related to many of you; and blessed be the Lord that now I can say, *Come all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul.* He has delivered my soul from death; and I earnestly desire he would keep my feet from falling, that I may walk before the Lord in the light of the living. I am under wounds, bruises, and broken bones; but I am encouraged to understand, that the dear Redeemer forgiveth all iniquities, and healeth all diseases; I have in a manifold sense destroyed myself, but it is supporting to me to hear him say, *In me is thy help.* Under a sense of the greatest unworthiness, I lay myself, I hope at his feet, and at your's, as a church of his; I am the chief of sinners; but would be within a church of Christ, if it may be thought convenient, though but at the threshold. Oh, among the children, among the children!—*But for tears he could speak no more.*

NEOPHYTUS. Oh, the difference between this and

his former acknowledgments! Certainly this pleased all the church. I am sure it would have pleased me.

THEOPH. I am waiting for the account of that.

NEOPHYTUS. I thank you, good THEOPHILUS, I understand you.

EPENETUS. The whole church heard him with many tears, and it was some time before the elders themselves could speak one word; at last, says *Dewi*, without asking any more questions, My dear brethren, you have as a church of Christ heard this account given of the restoring grace of God, and the present frame of soul our brother is in as to repentance, and resolution; if you are, as a church of Christ, glad thereof, satisfied therein, and testify your dear love to him, and his freedom to your most intimate fellowship in the Lord, signify it by lifting up your hands. Which they unanimously did. And he, poor heart, bowed his head toward the earth, and wept: then thanked them all for their love, and begged their prayers. Then *Yefan* gave the church a short, yet sweet discourse, from these words, *He restoreth my soul*; and after prayer, with abundant thanksgivings, the 23rd Psalm was sung; and so their mourning, in this particular ended. They sowed in tears and reaped in joy.

NEOPHYTUS. I rejoice to hear the affair ended so well, it is a pleasant reviving story to me. I was afraid they must have certainly cut him off: but God can heal backslidings.

EPENETUS. Indeed many of them expected nothing else but he must have been cut off, and therefore when God healed him they were so much the more affected with it; and great was the glory of that work, for by this means God fixed him in such an aversion to the sin of drunkenness, that he abhorred all the ways that led to it ever after; and was of great use unto the church so long as he lived. And though he was once like to defile many, God made him afterwards an eminent instrument to fortify all his brethren against all appearance of evil.

CHRISTOPH. This was very precious. Oh, my heart sinks under the stories I have heard abroad! When shall any out of the dark drinking tribes be raised up for service among their fellows! Now the villains drink away all tenderness of conscience, trample upon and despise the precepts and prohibitions of scripture; laugh at and deride a faithful preaching ministry; and are not ashamed to question, whether exhortations should be preached at all; scoff and sneer at prayers and tears poured out before the Lord for them; and with an aukward look will glory that they are not priest-ridden, as they call it, and love to repeat it; boast that they have been at the ale-house, (*hell-house* to use great *Bolton's* word) and that they are a-going thither again; and in the face of the sun glory in their shame. I say again, Oh, when will the Lord, according to his word, make strong drink bitter to such people!

NEOPHYTUS. And I say, **CHRISTOPHILUS**, Oh, when will you have done with those disagreeable things you have heard of abroad: I could wish you never had been near such a people; the very account of them makes my flesh tremble. But may all end as this church-meeting did, we have had the account of!

THEOPH. Well shot again, **NEOPHYTUS**, we have not had the account how that ended yet; don't you remember something spoke about one *Cadarn*, who was a snare to his brother? and though that was not directly an information lodged against him, yet being accidentally brought into the church, you may depend upon't that the faithful elders, in those primitive times, would not let it drop and lie as a stumbling-block in the church, without a public consideration of it. Therefore I hope **EPENETUS** will give us some particular account of that man.

EPENETUS. That man was a person of considerable sense, and of a strong constitution: was generally very good-tempered, and his company entertaining, facetious, and pleasant; could drink hard and not ap-

pear in the least concerned; his company was coveted by many, nor was any denied it who desired it; was a church-member, and in the main appeared religious. He had often been talked to by the elders, upon some things the lawfulness of which they questioned, and upon many things which appeared to them not expedient: and he was of such a temper, adorned with many agreeable and delightful improvements, that he received every thing in the kindest and most affable manner. But this occasion offering itself to take some notice of him in a public way, *Dewi* spoke to *Meddwyn* as follows:

Dear brother, now restored by grace, in taking notice of the several ways whereby your temptations gradually prevailed upon you, you observed that the company of brother *Cadarn*, here present, was in some sense a snare to you. I desire you would favor us with a more particular account of that.

Meddwyn, Sir, I have little reason to accuse any body; I am very sorry I mentioned it; I myself was my own tempter: but seeing, as the case stands now, I must speak; the agreeableness of his company, as my mind stood then, did vastly please me; and his example taught and encouraged me to drink; but, as I said before, I don't know the man that saw *him* drunk.

Dewi. Brother *Cadarn*, I hope if any poor brother of this church had said of you, that under temptations your company was useful for the restoring his soul, and your example encouraging to him to cleave to the Lord and walk in his duty, it would have been much more agreeable to you, than to hear such a story as this. How can you hear it, and not mourn in the dust before the Lord! Did you not sin! Did you not encourage the sins of others? And are they not therefore to be considered in a sense as your sins? and don't you think they will be considered so in the day of judgment? Brother, consider your ways, abstain from company keeping, and avoid drinking to excess. You are desired to speak.

Cadarn. Sir, I am very well satisfied, that humanity itself, not to say christianity, powerfully pleads for public usefulness; nor do I desire to live a day longer than I may be profitable to others. In all company where I am cast, I consider what may be most useful for conversation at that time and place. And if I fall short of attaining proposed usefulness, it's owing to imprudence, or something that might suddenly occur, for which I was not sufficiently prepared, and not from any depraved design. So I hope I partake not of other men's sins; and as for drinking to excess, the brother that spoke, I think justified me; at least he owned he could not accuse me, nor am conscious to myself, nor averse to appeal to all the world.

Dewi. Then, seeing you say you are not conscious to yourself, that at any time you drink to excess, give me leave brother to ask you, whether at any time you drink more than nature says is necessary, and religion says is enough.

Cadarn. Sir, I never drink to drunkenness, I keep within the perfect use of limb, reason, and sense: nor did any person in this world, I believe, say of me, There goes a drunkard.

Dewi. We read that Benhadad, King of Syria, was drinking himself *drunk* in his pavilions, yet had the perfect use of limb, reason and sense, and mounted a horse, and made his escape from the conquering tribes, 1 Kings xx. Nor are they, God himself being judge, a happy people that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. Their condition is as woeful with regard of the sinfulness of it, as theirs is who before all the world discover the most evident marks of drunkenness, not proper nor convenient to be so much as mentioned. And though perhaps it has not been said of you, There goes a drunkard, yet 'tis known of whom it has been said, There goes a person that can drink, and does drink very often as much as will make two or three men drunk, yet stands up under, and carries off all clean and unconcerned.

Cadarn. And thus, sir, I am no reproach to the cause I profess; and no man can call me a drunkard.

Dewi. To be *filled* with wine, or any strong drink wherein is excess, is a reproach to the cause you profess; and what is diametrically opposite to a being filled with the Spirit of Christ: and between calling you a drunkard, and calling you a drinking man, the difference is not great; and the sin is the same in drinking more than is meet.

Cadarn. Perhaps I am not so great a drinker as some men would make me; and my staying perhaps somewhat long in public-places upon business, may make them think I drink more than I do. While others drink to excess and discover it, my keeping myself sober, evidences me to be upon my guard.

Dewi. To tarry long at the wine stands condemned in God's word, and that business that requires it is either unlawful in itself, or sinfully and unlawfully managed: if the former, reject it; if the latter, reform it.

Cadarn. It is lawful in a moderate way to pursue the business of life, and provide for families; and I know, that very often if I had not staid so long and so late as I did, I should have missed of what turned to my considerable advantage.

Dewi. But a little in the way of righteousness hath a glory upon it, while great revenues out of the way of duty stand under a dark and dreadful cloud. Besides, how can you tell but Providence would have thrown more into your lap had you been absent, attending your special duty towards him whose blessing alone maketh rich? However, you would have obtained it, or retain it in a way more agreeable to your family and to yourself in soul and body.

Cadarn. I never knew that my family suffered by any thing I did, nor do I apprehend myself the worse in soul or body for any freedom I use in that way of living you reason with me upon.

Dewi. If you don't worship God with your family

before they go to bed; or if you don't worship God with them before it is late; they must be esteemed great sufferers: and so they must be though you worship in season, if you are full of liquor; though not what persons may call drunk. Under such circumstance they must be poor dry distant performances, not like to honor God, nor profit your families, nor hardly quiet your conscience. So then, your own soul must be the leaner for it, not being able to draw near to God in the Spirit of prayer, and enjoy fellowship with him in his love; say what you can, such a practice raises a wall between your soul and the chiefest good. And then as to your body, though you are blessed with a brave constitution, and a thousand pities it should not always be used for the noblest ends, this practice insensibly lays the foundation of innumerable afflictions to be felt hereafter.

Cadarn. As I said at first, so I say again, I aim at usefulness; and I hope I shall never live to be hurtful to myself or others.

Dewi. And as I said before, hurtful to yourself and family to be sure you are, whether you are sensible of it or no: and to add to what I said already, could not that which you spend needlessly be laid out to a better purpose in or by your family? And don't you think that you give your children a very bad example, which they are very like to follow to their hurt, and the hurt of their children, and of their children's children, for aught you know? Are you favored with time, leisure, health, and plenty, for such ends as these? You say, you aim at usefulness; And I say, is not your heart deceitful? Is not sin deceitful? Or, suppose you are not deceived; is that, according to the written word, the way to usefulness?

Cadarn. Sir, I have stopped the mouths of many, and in companies where I am known, they dare not blaspheme our Redeemer; and many of them have had favorable thoughts of our religion, and have owned that my company and conversation convinced them,

that we were not such a narrow-souled severe society, as they had been informed; and they have often said, they had a mind to come and hear christianity preached. But among them I never drink to excess; for I never am drunk; and therefore am capable of reasoning with them, when perhaps many of them are not very capable of resisting any argument I produce; and drunkenness being a sin against the very light of nature, I have the advantage of fixing an immediate conviction upon them, for their profit.

Dewi. And here, by your own confession, you may see the hurt you do: they had been informed that we were strict in our morals, bent against all appearance of evil, and fixed for Christ in all dependance upon him, and conformity to him; and by you they are convinced that we are not such a people, and so they begin to have favorable thoughts of us. Pray, brother, is this doing them good? You say you never drink to excess, because you are never drunk; pray, is not a bottle or two of wine a drinking to excess at one time? Did the apostle mean such a quantity, when he said to Timothy, *Use a little wine*? Or suppose you can *minge* strong drink; that is, drink measure after measure, and not be concerned, is there not a *wo* unto men of that strength and practice? And what though you are not drunk, pray what does our Lord say of them that eat and drink *with* the drunken? And if something or other, sure, had not impaired your own reason, you would never have mentioned *that* as a fit time to reason with persons, when they themselves are not capable of receiving what reason may offer. And besides, to borrow the prophet's expression, I must say, you *are as one of them*: and do harden them, and grieve the godly.

Cadarn. But I have several of the godly sometimes in company with me, and I am more pleased with their company than any other.

Dewi. You godly souls, observe it and beware! They by being there harden you; and either you grieve or harden them.

Cadarn. What you have said, sir, lays me under some conviction and concern; I thank you for this pains you have took with me. I begin to think that many sins and much hurt may attend a course of moderate drinking, as some persons may call it, when evident tokens of drunkenness appear not.

Yefan. Brother, I am glad to hear you say so. Sins and hurt! no tongue can express how much. When persons ready to perish; and others of heavy hearts have nothing to relieve and refresh them; one healthful person shall needlessly destroy as much as might comfortably refresh ten. That drinking which, upon strict examination, cannot be called a drinking to the glory of God, is sinful drinking. That which wastes precious time, that which hinders meditation, that which promotes babbling or impertinent talk, that which inflames the blood, that which indisposes for the most serious devotion, is sinful drinking. Again, that drinking which indisposes persons for the most spiritual attendance upon God in family worship; or throws it late and out of season; which prevents, or renders the mind unfit for a private close examination in the evening, of our thoughts, words, and actions through the day, spiritual reflections thereon, and humble fervent closet supplications before God, is sinful drinking. That drinking which gives unto others a wrong idea of the strictness and holiness of the christian religion, as if it could bear with, connive at, or did allow of the least abuse of the mercies of the God of heaven, which grieves the godly, ensnares the unwary, and hardens the wicked, is sinful drinking. In short, that which conforms the professors of christianity unto the world, and confirms the world in its vain and sinful courses, is downright opposition unto God, and the great designs of the gospel; though persons may at the same time seemingly keep themselves from being drunk all their days. And therefore I do in the name of Christ, and as an elder in this church, call upon you for ever to abstain from and abhor all drink-

ing, but that which God does make your duty, and nature renders necessary; and upon that you can with all spiritual freedom beg the blessing of God.

Cadarn. My honored pastor and teacher, I do with all thankfulness acknowledge your faithfulness to Christ and to me. I am thankful this reproof was so public, for the benefit of others whom I have done harm to. I repent, and beg your prayers, that where I have done iniquity, I may do so no more.

And upon this, with thanksgivings their requests were made know to God and the meeting concluded.

NEOPHYTUS. A precious meeting! here God bore testimony to the word of his grace, and to his institutions and appointments. The glory of the Lord was among the people, and his fear was before their eyes; and the holy discipline of his house was attended with becoming dread upon their minds: and with the success which followed their loving and regular endeavours for each other's good, I am vastly pleased.

CHRISTOPH. And so am I, dear *NEOPHYTUS*; but when with former glory I compare the present posture of things which I was informed of abroad, my heart sinks within me. Where drinking fellows despise and dare the discipline of the churches: and with hearts, full of what I must call *Atheism*, and with looks full of indignation and disdain, say to the elders, *cut me off, cut me off*. And when they are cut off, follow their old ways without reformation or concern, stiffly maintain some invisible privileges belonging to them, and glory that they know the gospel when they hear it; and then with looks they think big and brave, with a sneer and a scoff, rave against all churches as abounding with *priest-craft*: and if any of their fellows are by some stings of conscience kept back from such a pitch of confidence, they are laughed at, and despised as feeble, foolish, and weak: yea, many of the wretches have made a *tender conscience* their sport. But *God will come to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their*

ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts, and their mouth speaketh great swelling words.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, I must say again, CHRITOPHILUS, what an unhappy thing it was that you went abroad! These things once you did not know; and I must say indeed, that he that increaseth the knowledge of them, increaseth sorrow. You have so distressed my mind, that I don't know how nor when I shall be delivered. I again pray dear EPHENETUS to give me something more agreeable.

EPHENETUS. Then take it thus: *Cadarn* immediately reformed, and never fell into such a course any more; religiously abstained from all occasions leading thereto; and reaping in his own soul the great advantage of a close walk with God and with his saints; that day twelve-month being a church-meeting-day, he stands up, and desires the elders would give him leave to speak to, and in the church, something that was upon his mind. And upon leave he spoke as follows:

Honored and beloved in the Lord, you may remember most of you, how I was reasoned with and reproved about a year ago in the church. I am here this day to bless God for that day's reproof and instruction. From my sin, as now I can call it, I was helped to abstain, and the precious fruits of a walk, I humbly hope more agreeable, I have ever since enjoyed. My natural spirit more free and cheerful, my temper more even and comfortable to myself and others, my sleep easy and refreshing. As I then foolishly pleaded, I never was drunk, but now I know I was not as I should have been; perhaps too well acquainted with what some people esteem greatness of mind; but indeed too great a stranger to the joys of God's nation, and the gladness of his heritage. But the Lord in mercy has restored my soul; I know it, and my family know it, and I thought it my duty to let you know it as a

church. I have nearness to God in my secret and private approaches to him, the meditations of him is sweet to me; I have fellowship with him, through grace, in family-worship: and I see a blessed change in my family, and they see a change in me. I am helped to converse with God in the church-assemblies, and he makes me glad in his house of prayer. I think if it was put to my choice, I would not for all Caerludd forsake or be deprived of my present comforts, and fall into my former way. But may free grace keep me, and for ever deliver me from trusting in an arm of flesh. Now I have a precious experience of the happiness of the man, who only eats and drinks, that he may be fitted the more thereby for the service and the enjoyment of God: his table is no snare, and in a sense, every cup, is a cup of salvation. I bless God for church-membership; I bless God, the elders thought it their duty to reprove me; and this day I bless God here publicly for the precious use he made of that reproof to my soul; and I earnestly desire your prayers for me, that I may be for ever guided, kept, sanctified, and comforted.

NEOPHYTUS. A good story, that makes me bless the God of all grace too: my dear EPHENETUS, it refreshes me. May we always here stories of the conquering grace of God! and I hope you are ready and furnished to give us some more of them.

EPHENETUS. My dear friends and neighbours, our duties to God and our families now call upon us; and I wish we may in evening-attendance on our heavenly Father, enjoy much of his presence, and fortastes of future glory.

THE END OF THE SEVENTH DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE VIII.

The Covenant-Interest and Church-Membership of their Children, matter of great encouragement, comfort, and joy, to godly Parents. The Children of the Church are not only the Care of their Parents, but of the Church, and its Officers also; and are to be instructed, encouraged, or reproved, as the Case may require; more privately, or more publicly: exemplified in the Account of Cyndyn, a stubborn perverse Son of Gobeithiol. His aversion to holy Duties; Means of Instruction used by his Parents; he is privately reproved by the Elders; not reclaimed; the Church proceed to public Admonition; they proceed to a second Admonition; he continues obstinate; is cut off. His sinful Companions banter him; uneasy in his own Mind, he goes away from his Parents, wanders about in great Distress of Soul; at length recovered and comforted, he instructs others: News of this providentially brought to his Parents; Messengers sent for him, he returns; relates to the Church his Experience; by this means another rebellious Son, under Admonition, is melted and converted; they are both, with the utmost Affection and Joy, received by the Church.

THEOPHILUS.

HERE is our NEOPHYTUS hastening through the grove; though some things in our last conference distressed him, he is still eager to hear the story.

CHRISTOPHILUS. It was only some of that part which I bore in't, that distressed him; but though I was un-

der heaviness and anguish of mind myself, on the account of what I had seen and heard abroad, I mentioned no part of it with a design to distress others, but to raise up in our hearts together just and holy resentment and indignation; and to put us upon all prayer against that prevailing iniquity, in city and country, which will, unless the Spirit of the Lord is pleased eminently to work against it, wash away all the power and appearance of religion.

THEOPH. I hope I earnestly desire, that all who love the Lord may with earnestness, brightness, and zeal, bear their testimony against all evil. So, my **NEOPHYTUS**, I hope you bring us good tidings: your countenance discovers cheerfulness. Come, what is the best news?

NEOPHYTUS. The gospel, the gospel, most excellent **THEOPHILUS**, the gospel is the best news for ever. But what gave cheerfulness to my countenance, if any appears there, was the consideration of that innocent mirth which universal nature at this time seems to discover.

THEOPH. But we know that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now.

NEOPH. Ay, ay, 'tis true, there is nothing we have ever seen that comes up to the glory and beauty of Paradise; but there is a promise, that our wilderness shall be as Eden, and our desert as the garden of the Lord. In the mean while I think 'tis wonderful, that, though groans and death must attend every thing that is beautiful and pleasant, there is a time to rejoice. **THEOPHILUS**, had you been with me this day in my walks, you would have said, that God had made Tabor and Hermon to rejoice, and the little hills also on every side: oh! it refreshed me to see our pastures clothed with flocks, and our vallies covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing; and though I know that every man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward, yet God made me glad through his work; and the singing of birds around me did strongly persua-

ade me to sing too: and because they could not praise God with design, I thought they bid me do it for them.

Beasts fain would sing; birds ditty to their notes,
Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To thy renown: but all their hands and throats
Are brought to man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's high-priest; he doth present
The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,
Such as springs use that fall, and winds that blow.

He that to praise and laud thee doth refrain,
Doth not refrain unto himself alone,
But robs a thousand who would praise thee fain;
And doth commit a world of sin in one.

HERBERT.

THEOPH. Indeed did we but duly observe the wonders of Providence, not to mention those of redeeming love which appear infinitely above all blessing and praise, we should see ourselves constantly called upon to give thanks and sing; Providence, not only under the consideration of its more immediate concern with us, but as regarding, restraining, and relieving our fellow-creatures all around us. But pray, **NEOPHYTUS**, what did you sing?

NEOPHYTUS.

The mercies of Jehovah sing, for evermore will I;
I'll with my mouth thy truth make known to all posterity.
For I have said, that mercy shall for ever be up built:
Establish in the very heavens, thy faithfulness thou wilt.
With him that is my chosen one, a covenant made I have;
And to my servant David, I by oath this promise gave
To perpetuity thy seed establish sure I will;
Likewise to generations all thy throne I'll build up still.
Also the heavens thy wonders, Lord, they shall with praise confess
Within the assembly of the saints, likewise thy faithfulness.

CHRISTOPH. A precious song! what majesty there is upon it! how does God magnify his word! and who knows but this may be a proper text, if I may properly say so, to our present conference! Here mercy that shall be built up for ever; here's truth and faithfulness to perform all the designs of it; here's an

established covenant, and in it a seed for ever to be continued, and the faithfulness of God towards them within the assembly of the saints to be confessed.

THEOPH. With the Lord there is mercy, and in mercy doth he delight; he taketh pleasure in those who trust in his mercy, and all his path towards them are mercy and truth.

PHILAL. A blessed subject for those who have made themselves miserable to meditate upon: his mercy shall be built up for ever; his mercy is in the heavens; his mercy is above the heavens; and of his mercy we should sing aloud.

NEOPH. And with pleasure I shall observe, that as his mercy is great to the heavens, so the earth is full of his mercy. Who can fully lay open the multitude of his tender mercies? and who can fully receive any part of revelation wherein they are held forth to our view? his mercy endureth for ever; is from everlasting to everlasting. Oh! my heart is refreshed with that soul-supporting instructing text, *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

SYLLOGIST. Why really when I have considered, according to my poor measure, the wise and tender providence of God towards every moving living thing, the provision he makes for the innumerable nations, the inhabitants of the several elements, the pleasures they enjoy according to their several capacities and dispositions, (for what he gives them they gather) my heart is thankful on their behalf. Every thing attending them all is beautiful, except what our sin hath procured. But there is one gift of the God of nature to most, if not all of them, that I have often been greatly affected with; and that's their pity, good-will, and care towards their young. A sheep to defend its lamb will threaten a mastiff; and a timorous hen will, in defence of her young, fly at an eagle. I have thought what a merciful provision this for the safety of the feeble, that cannot defend themselves: and with true pleasure I hope I have at times encouraged a contem-

plation of infinite mercies and pity in the eternal spring of life.

THEOPH. Your following the several streams of pity and affection in animal life, up to the Fountain from whence they flow, is certainly a desirable part of that wisdom the Father of lights bestows on the rational part of the creation. Man is in a special manner fitted for such contemplations ; and in him, according to the more noble and rational powers of his mind, natural affection must exceed whatever may be seen any where else ; or, under the dominion of degeneracy, where the best things are turned to be the worst of all, he will discover the basest of dispositions. What greater demonstration of the divine pity and goodness in Providence, than the sincere affections of tender parents ; and what can be more sordid and base than a heart destitute thereof ?

CHRISTOPH. Well, my dear THEOPHILUS, you have touched me. It is now many years ago since God was pleased to reach my soul by his grace, and I was made, I hope with pleasure and profit, to search the scriptures : in several places whereof he condescends to express his love and pity to his people, by that natural affection tender parents feel and discover. And though for a pretty many years after conversion I was no parent, yet I thought I understood such expressions to my great comfort ; but since God has graciously given me children, I understand them in another-guise manner. The pains I have felt in the afflictions of my child, and the very sensible pleasure I have enjoyed in its relief and prosperity, the tender love, the earnest desires after all happiness for this life and the next, and the careful attendance without weariness, to the use of all means, with and before God and man, for its good, have given me some more intimate acquaintance with the grace and love of God in such kind expressions, than ever I had or could come at before. *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him : for he knoweth our*

frame, he remembereth that we are dust. Thou shalt call me my Father, and shalt not turn away from me. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you: A mother may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Many more scriptures of the like kind are very precious to me. For I think with myself, if my love to my child, who am but a poor sinful parent, has so many ways of discovering itself, what must the love, bowels, and compassions of my heavenly Father be! he bids me shew this love; he works in me this love and pity, and therefore in him it must be infinite unto me and my poor children too.

PHILAL. Justly observed, my dear CHRISTOPHILUS, and may we be helped to improve our mercies thus to the glory of the Father of our mercies! Natural affection is a mercy; a mercy to us, and a mercy to our children; and that God expresses his kindness to us thereby is a mercy; and it is a very great mercy that God gives unto us so many encouragements to hope, that he will do for our children in a way of mercy, greater things than our strongest natural affections can stretch forth themselves unto. The foundation for this mercy has been gloriously laid; and according to dear NEOPHYTUS's blessed song, it shall be built up for ever.

THEOPH. My dear PHILALETHES, you fill me with expectation; my children are near and dear unto me; come, let us have some account of those encouragements.

PHILAL. The covenant of God to Abraham abides for our perpetual encouragement, as to the salvation of our seed, Gen. xvii. 7. There God promises to be a God unto Abraham and to his seed after him. *This God is our God for ever and ever.* Blessed are the people whose God is the Lord; the Lord is our God, and the God of our seed: therefore we are the seed of the blessed Lord, we and our off-spring with us.

NEOPH. But did that promise to Abraham intend everlasting happiness in the enjoyment of God him-

self, or only the land of Canaan for a happy possession?

PHILAL, The first, to be sure: for the promise of Canaan is in the verse following: *And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger.*

NEOPHYTUS. But does the first great promise then really reach to and intend the godly among the Gentiles and their seed?

PHILAL. The Holy Spirit in the New Testament says, *That if we be Christ's* (that is, brought to give up ourselves to Jesus Christ by faith) *then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.* The promise was, that God would be Abraham's God, and the God of his seed; every believing Gentile is an heir according to that promise; has as great a right to it, as ever Abraham had for himself and his seed.

NEOPHYTUS. If the covenant is but free and absolute, as I fully believe it is; a great deal of comfort, to be sure, must from thence flow unto poor tender-hearted believing parents.

PHILOLOGUS. Free and absolute! how can it be otherwise! I believe we have in this conference before now heard something of that; and to which I may now add, that though it was strictly conditional to Christ, the very form of expressions wherein it is delivered, does signify its being altogether absolute to us. So to Abraham, Gen xvii. 2. *I will give my covenant;* according to the Hebrew. So to David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. *He hath put to me an everlasting covenant;* as the Hebrew hath it. So Jer. xxxi. 33. *This is the covenant I will cut to the house of Israel.* And evident it is, that it should be so rendered: for the Holy Spirit gives it so to us in the New Testament, Heb. viii. 10. *For this is the Testament, I will dispose to the house of Israel.* And indeed the whole design of the gospel requires that all should be absolute and free; and the present condition of ourselves and children makes it necessary it should be so.

NEOPHYTUS, I remember the account given here of *Yefan's* discourse with a church-member about the covenant of grace; and it was said, that it was made with Christ as Head of the elect, and their Representative; pray were all the children of the godly in that covenant representatively?

PHILAL. In the concern that we have with them in our day, we have great reason to believe so concerning them as well as concerning their parents, till it appears to the contrary.

NEOPHYTUS. But when will that appear?

PHILAL. No body in the world can tell: though we must deal with them for sin.

NEOPHYTUS. But if they are in covenant, are they all regenerated?

PHILAL. All the elect were in the covenant before regeneration, and all the unconverted elect are in the covenant of grace, or they are in no sense in Christ, and so were never chosen in him. But we can't tell how early regeneration may be, though it may be long first before it discovers itself; and though after all hopeful discoveries, it may be again clouded.

NEOPHYTUS. What if a godly man has many children, has he the same reason to believe concerning all of them?

PHILAL. Yes, every one: for the promise is to you and to your children; and the promises made to the godly fathers of old concerning their children, Christ came to confirm, as the Spirit of God informs us, Rom. xv. 8, 9, 10. *that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. And again he saith, Rejoice ye Gentiles with his people.*

NEOPHYTUS. Then I see that what is called a covenant to us, and what we call the covenant wherein all the godly and their seed are interested, is a mere promise.

PHILAL. Yes to be sure, the covenants of promise. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

NEOPHYTUS. Then pray what do some people mean and intend when they talk of baptismal vows, and children's entering into covenant, and their being received into some *fæderal* state wherein they were not afore.

SYLLOGIST. Nothing at all : or what's worse than nothing.

NEOPHYTUS. But they say, what are the reins thrown upon our necks? are we under no engagements to repent and believe? does not our baptismal covenant lay us under obligations to obey and become religious?

SYLLOGIST. And you may ask them the next time you see them, whether they were under obligations to obey and become religious previous to what they call a covenant? Was the law of God imperfect till then? And what strength has that put thereunto? And you may tell them that in the covenant of grace there is provision made for faith, repentance, and every grace : for according unto the exceeding great and precious promises that are given unto us, we do and shall partake of the divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

NEOPHYTUS. But when no godliness appears upon the seed of believers, through many years, and even unto old age, and perhaps until death, what can we say?

PHILAL. Let God be true : Wisdom shall be justified of all her children. Their unbelief shall not make the faith of God of none effect. Of believers we are not infallible judges. It is the promise of God, and not the profession of man, that we depend upon. Who must go, or is gone, to eternal darkness, we determine not. God can do great things for and in a great sinner in a moment ; and that perhaps when he is past giving any account of it to any that may be about him. To the free promise of God we flee, and we are sure he won't chide us for it, and say we should not have took his word ; for though he said so, he did not mean so. No, God forbid any such cogitation

should so much as attempt an entrance into our hearts! We are sure we are heirs according to the promise made to Abraham; and we are sure that promise was, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.* And what though our faith may be tried? so long as the promise stands, it shall not be overturned.

SYLLOGIST. But through grace we also must own that our faith is not put to it in this matter, so as some poor weak people may imagine. We can see many thousands, and many thousands more, to each or either of which we can speak in the apostle's words to Timothy, *When we call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother, and thy mother; and we are persuaded that in thee also.* Though the promise in the 45th Psalm doubtless may comprehend more, yet in this sense we have seen it, and do see it daily fulfilled, *Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children:* as also, *They that shall be of thee, shall build, &c.* God graciously fulfils those promises, and we see many of our children make haste. Nor would we for the world give way to a few ill-natured carnal objections against the eternal truth and faithfulness of him that speaketh from heaven.

CHRISTOPH. I hope I shall always with pleasure own the grace and truth of the covenant our God has given to us. It is ordered *in all things*; and if there had not been a gracious order in it for my poor children, I could not have said so; it contains all my desire; and I am sure if my children had been left out, *all my desire* had not been in it. It is God that hath given us natural affection, and we are sure that under the influences of new-creation grace, those natural affections are enlarged and improved, and in proportion our earnest desires after some firm foundation of hope concerning the salvation of our children; and I fear not to say that God is the Author of those earnest desires. And why does he fill us with them? What, to distress us and disappoint us! God forbid. He says, *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* All spiritual breath-

ings and desires have their most suitable encouragements ; but whoever disputes against the covenant and promise of salvation to our children, does all that he can to destroy the foundation of our hope concerning them : A work fit for none but the barbarous, the cruel, and the unbelieving part of mankind.

THEOPH. I have found, through mercy, the covenant of God precious to me in the dying hours of some of my children : have been helped to plead it with God for them, and have seen it as a chariot, the midst whereof was paved with love, to carry them safe to glory ; and by faith in the promises of the Lord have seen them therein. With and for my living children I plead it, and bless God for it ; and am thankful to see any of them, though with a feeble hand, take hold of it. God has made abundant provision for our comfort. In the everlasting covenant he gave himself to us and to our seed : and in all subservient covenants he always included the seed of the godly with their parents. No instance can be given wherein they were left out ; and he never will leave them out ; for he hateth putting away. Blessed be God for the ancient charter of the church that shall never be revoked. Here we can with pleasure stand and see many other encouraging scriptural considerations, which wait upon this. Pray, dear PHILALETHES, give us some of them,

PHILAL. Why really, most excellent THEOPHILUS, it is with a great deal of pleasure I have sometimes considered the *claim* the Lord lays to the children of the godly as *his* children. *Lo ! children are an heritage of the Lord ; and the fruit of the womb is his reward*, Psalm cxxvii. 3. It is what we are called to take special notice of ; which must intend something more than the common right he has to all the creation. They are God's special heritage ; the children of his beloved, as he calls the parents of them in the foregoing verse. The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the Lot of his inheritance : And of places where the

godly sojourn not, he says, *What have I here?* Though the whole creation is in his hands, as the clay in the hands of the potter: his sheep and lambs are in his hands for eternal life. *You shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And you shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.* Were the children left out here? or were they excluded by the Spirit of God in the New Testament, when he takes up these words, and says, *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priestwood, an holy nation, a peculiar people?* A chosen generation, but their infants shut out! God forbid. *Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them.* And when sore degeneracy prevailed upon the visible church, the Lord says, *Moreover, thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me, and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured: Is this of thy whoredoms a small matter, that thou hast slain my children?*

CHRISTOPH. With thankfulness of heart have I looked upon my children as the Lord's. I have indeed given them to him; but of his own have I given to him. And it was his own gracious revealed will in the promise, that encouraged me to do so. This child is the Lord's, and that child is the Lord's; and he seems to say to me, as the Egyptian princess said to Moses's mother, *Take this child and nurse it for me:* and with joy I apply myself unto the work.

PHILAL. And what you say leads me futher to observe, that the Lord's committing the children heretofore in a special manner to the care of the church, gives unto us special encouragement to look upon them as peculiarly the Lord's. How did the Lord approve of that care in Abraham; *For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* And how did he recommend it unto the tribes! *And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto*

thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, Deut. vi. 6, 7. Is not the special love of our God unto, and his care over our children seen in this? *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel, he hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them.* Oh salvation, salvation to our children!

PHILOLOGUS. And under the care and inspection of the elders they were, and as the case required, underwent the discipline of that day.

NEOPHYTUS. If they were members of the church, as every body must grant they were, subject unto the instituted government thereof, they must be: which should also be looked upon as a great privilege, denoting the gracious designs of God towards them for their good through time and to eternity. And I remember that several weeks ago it was observed here among us, that the children of church-members are themselves members of the church their parents belong to, and are under the care and inspection thereof.

PHILAL. Doubtless; the revealed will of God, under both the Old and New Testament, makes the truth thereof very evident. Is it not said of Christ, that a seed should serve him, that should be counted to the Lord for a generation? Can any body think, that church-membership is not intended? And is it not said in another place, where the change of the Old Testament dispensation into that of the New is very particularly foretold *But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed be established before thee.* What can establishment before the Lord include less than church-membership? and in what sense may the children be said to be *continued*, if not in that? And does not the prophet Jeremy, when expressly prophesying of gospel-days, tell us of New Testament saints, that their children should be as aforetime?

NEOPHYTUS. Yes truly, the case seems to be very plain; and if it was not to serve some turn or other, sure no body would deny it.

PHILAL. True; especially if we consider what is further said of it in the New Testament; where our Lord tells us in plain words concerning little children, *that of such is the kingdom of heaven.* And the Spirit of God says, that if either of the parents be a believer, then the children are holy: for in that sense they are considered with the root from whence they spring; if the root be holy, so likewise are the branches.

THEOPH. All this makes me, with holy pleasure, think of that blessed promise. *I will save thy children;* and of the wonderful day a coming, when this glory shall be attended with greater brightness, they shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, they and their off-spring with them. In the mean time blessed be God for his covenant! As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord, *my spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.*

PHILOLOGUS. How comfortable unto a tender godly parent, and how encouraging is that special notice the apostle John takes of little children! 1 John ii. 12, 13. *I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you little children, because you have known the Father.* By little children he must intend what we commonly understand by that word. I grant that in the epistle it is several times understood of all the christians to whom he wrote; but here it cannot be so taken, because the little children are more than once distinguished from young men and fathers. Again, though in our translation, as I have repeated the words, we have *little children* twice, yet in the original the apostle makes a

difference: though in both words he discovers a great deal of tender affection and love to a great degree of fondness. I write to you, my dear little youths, though young in years, you have received some instruction, and have known the father. Christ the Prince of shepherds feeds his flock, and gathers his lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom; when he gave his apostles charge to feed his *sheep*, he expressly charged them to feed his *lambs* also: and here we see the beloved disciple in a very faithful manner discharging his trust. But let affectionate pious parents for ever admire the grace of God! the sins of their little-ones forgiven; they are among the pardoned! Nothing but unbelief will reject this. And let them be encouraged to bring up their little-ones *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; that they may in tender youth know the father.

SYLLOGIST. Amazing grace indeed! and from what you mentioned last upon nurture and admonition, I must observe that there appears abundance of the love and grace of God to our children, in the commands he lays upon us to bring them up in that way of the Lord; or, as the Spirit of the Lord expresses himself elsewhere, *Train up a child in the way*. Surely the many repeated precepts of God concerning their education, with strict charge not to take those measures that tend to discourage them, are plain demonstrations of his covenant regard to them, and unspeakable encouragements unto us concerning them.

NEOPHYTUS. Our honored EPHENETUS, upon hearing what our dear and valuable neighbours have observed to the great comfort of all godly parents, give me leave to put one thing to you: In the scripture we see that the children of the godly are to be considered in the same covenant-promises of grace with their parents; that they are the Lord's children in a distinguishing manner from the world; they are his heritage; were in a very peculiar manner committed to the care of the church, to be diligently taught and faithfully watched

over; and concerning whom it has been absolutely promised, that whatever changes should attend the church, their children should be as aforetime, they should continue, they should be established before the Lord; which promise made to the fathers Christ confirmed, and with his own mouth declared concerning little children, that the kingdom of heaven is theirs; after his ascension sent his Spirit down, to testify that the promises remained still the same to the godly and their children; and according to these promise they are holy, and their sins are forgiven them: and upon all this, the parents under the greatest obligations and the strongest encouragements to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; I say, upon all this I pray you to tell me, what did our Lord mean, when, after his resurrection, he left it in charge with his disciples, to feed his *lambs*?

EPENETUS. Upon the evidence briefly from scripture given, and thus summed up, I do assert, and hope to maintain if need be, that Christ by feeding his *lambs* meant, that godly tender care and love towards all the children of the church, in a sincere and faithful discharge of all duties with diligence which revelation requires, and reason renders necessary. What did our Lord intend by feeding his sheep? the very same he must mean by feeding his *lambs*: which must intend a faithful distribution of their respective portions unto each in due season. The children of the church are not only the care of their parents, but of the church and its officers also: to be instructed, encouraged, or reproved, as the case may require; more privately or more publicly: And though at present duties of this kind are much neglected, yet from the beginning it was not so.

NEOPHYTUS. I hope now in the course of your story it may appear seasonable for you to favor us with an instance or two upon this.

EPENETUS. You may remember that, not long since, I mentioned a visit of one of the bishops, of the first

church in *Caerludd*, to one *Gobeithiol*, and *Mwynedd* his wife; both very eminent christians, but under great distress of mind, on the account of a stubborn perverse son of theirs, whose name was *Cyndyn*. And very brief account of that youth you may take thus:

When he was yet but a young child there appeared upon him some uncommon tokens of perverseness and ill-nature; though the parents always hoped they were only such as all other children had, or such as would quickly vanish before the power of a christian education and growing prevailing reason. There were some things in him which for his years gave, especially as his parents might think, uncommon discoveries of wit, contrivance, and design; and though always appearing in some selfish, disagreeable, or naughty instances, yet a foundation was laid in the parents' expectation, that such parts in time would be fitted up and ripened for some uncommon service: accordingly he had in their affections a place, that might be called an uncommon degree of fondness.

But as he grew up, the disagreeable tokens of a perverse nature grew faster than he did. He discovered particularly a vast aversion to prayer: never was willing to get up in a morning till the worship of God in the family was over; and at night, either he was asleep, or there must be one to keep him awake, or his head would ache and to bed he must go. In the public worship, he would be staring about him for his diversion, or at some foolish trifling play with hands, feet, or asleep; and upon examination, when he came home, what he remembered, (for his parents charged him to observe what he heard, and bring with him home as much as he could) he would either say that his head did ache, or that something fell out by the way which made him forget what he did remember; or that he remembered something he was sure, only he could not say the very words on't. Reading he always abhorred, and it was a torment to him to hear others read; and though his parents always told him

of his natural state and the only way of salvation, and how by prayer, night and morning, he should cry to God ; and even should never partake of his food without thankful thoughts sent up to God, and words of prayer for a blessing, but prayer he abhorred, and to his food he always fell like a swine.

The means of instruction the parents used were many ; they catechised, they made him learn some portions of scripture by heart, they would over and over tell him the meaning of them, they would reason with him, reprove him, pray with him, chastise him, call others to reason with him, especially the elders, and *Edgar* ; and faithfully from time to time they did it, and now and then would fasten seemingly some conviction upon him, and obtain some promises from him, but all to very little purpose. However, any little thing the poor parents were very glad of, and thankful for. They kept in their duty towards him, always earnestly desiring and eagerly expecting to see some good fruit to follow ; and to their great joy a sudden reformation took him, and a great change appeared upon him ; he would constantly join in family-worship, would talk about religion, keep company with religious youths, would pray with them, and would pray alone : now were his parents pleased, now they wept for joy.

But after a little while their tears took another turn, and their trial became almost intolerable : I told you there appeared a change *upon* him, and now it appeared there was no change *in* him. He threw away that external religion he took up, left off reading, was weary of family-worship, forsook the company of any young ones who were for God, and would pray no more : his former prayers were generally loud, but now that noise was laid. His parents could hardly get him to the public worship, he was drove to't as a slave, and behaved in it like a stupid obstinate sinner. He chose the worst of company, conformed unto their ways, and in many things quickly became their principal. Now

prayers, now tears, now reproofs, now chastisements, now threatnings, now promises, now all the ways and means, but all to no purpose, he hated instruction, and was in love with all the ways of death.

One time being out on his wicked rambles, and found in the ways of sin, was brought home, and his father being able enough to deal with him, sent up a sigh to heaven and gave him a severe chastisement, and cried sorely as he did it : for being a tender father, he felt the blows himself ; they went more to his heart than they did to his son's. However, to bed the young man immediately went ; and the father into his closet to pour his soul out before God ; and the poor tender mother retired also to mourn and pray alone, The father was afraid he had chastised too rashly and too severely ; afraid that he had not only hurt his poor child's body, but hardened his heart, making him think hard of religion. The mother was not without such thoughts also. They each of them apart mourned under this ; and when they met, they could not speak to one another for some time. At last, says

Mwynedd, My dear, what have you done ! For my part my heart is under the greatest concern. Will he not think christianity cruel ? Have you not given him what he must carry with him to his grave ? Our child to our great grief is very rebellious, but pray what do you think you have been at ?

Gobeithiol. My dear, don't you add to my grief : it is almost greater than I can bear. I have not chastised willingly ; I have scourged myself : and thought it was my work, it was my strange work ; I desire I never may do it more. I am afraid I have exceeded : but I aimed at my duty, and did not do it in vengeance, but designing his true advantage ; many a time before now I chastised him : if he persists much longer, I suppose I shall have done with it : for why should he be stricken if thereupon he revolts more and more ?

Mwynedd. I do believe that to chastise him is your duty. I would not have you fall under a reproof that

was given to a very great man of God, because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not; though he had reproved them too, yet perhaps with too much gentleness; *Why do ye such things? nay my sons: for it is no good report that I hear.* I own that you should and do all that you can to restrain him; but all the powers and passions of my soul are at present so exercised, that I cannot determine what's convenient for you to do, nor him to suffer. Excuse me, I am his mother——

Gobeithiol. And, my dear, I am his father; and unto me the Lord says, *Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying: and you know who hath said, He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes.* I hope I have done nothing inconsistent with my duty to God, nor love to my child.

Mwynedd. But with submission, I think you fell upon him too soon, and perhaps too severe. Not but that his sins deserve more, but paternal chastisements, you know, are not vindictive punishments: so it is not what measure he deserves you should consider, but what measure is most likely to do him good.

Gobeithiol. Moderate chastisements you know I have often given him, to no purpose, I hope you can't blame me for thinking a more severe chastisement necessary: and I trust I have not laid upon him now more than he can bear.

Mwynedd. On many accounts I a'n't a capable judge of that; time will discover it: but, as I said before, I think you went too inconsiderately to work. Had you took him into a room, and reasoned with him first, upon the greatness of his sin, and the sincerity of your love, and the necessity of your duty, and in his hearing sent up a few words to God for a blessing upon what you were going to do, I think it would have been much better. What you did, you seemingly did in wrath; and you know the wrath of man doth not fulfil the righteousness of God.

Gobeithiol. My dear, I did send up a sigh to God, and though my son did not perceive it, I hope God heard it, and will in his own time answer it. Nevertheless, I believe I have been too sudden and rash, and may be too severe; now my second thoughts are cooler than my first. I find the bowels and the pity of a father, and I am glad I do, though in some respects they add unto my distress.

Mwynedd. I think sometimes that your distress is not to be compared to mine. I have brought forth for trouble: my sucking child, the son of my womb, is the son of my sorrow. I have wept over him tears enough to drown him, and yet I am alive, under renewed distress. Oh, my child, my dear child, of whom I still travail in birth! Shall I ever see Christ formed in him! He was born unto us, while we were yet in heathenism, before we were born again; does the covenant of grace belong unto him.

Gobeithiol. Yes, my dear, it does, notwithstanding the stubbornness that appears upon him. God is our God, and unto him in that covenant we have given our child, and it was he that encouraged us to do so; and we shall yet see, sooner or later, it was not in vain. But our faith must be tried, and it shall stand the trial, and in the end triumph in the enjoyment of its highest expectations. The vision is for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry wait for it.

Mwynedd. Then pray, my dear, go to the throne of grace for a blessing on this correction, that it may be for the present and eternal good of our poor child, and let me join with you.

Upon this they threw themselves down before the Lord, they prayed, they mourned, they confessed and bewailed their imprudences in all their carriage towards their child from the very first, and particularly at this time; humbled themselves under a sense of the sore trial upon them; and with many tears committed their child to God, and to the word of his grace, begging the

blessing of heaven upon all reproof, correction, example, and advice. But still that night their son had more rest than they had. No body can tell how 'tis with tender parents, but tender parents themselves, as our beloved CHRISTOPHILUS observed.

CHRISTOPH. Dear EPENETUS, in this story you have touched me to the quick; not that I have through mercy, a prospect of any such perverse children, but natural affections I am acquainted with; and in hearing this relation I can't help putting myself into the place of those tender tried parents, and I wonder how they did to live! The pains of such parents no words can reach. But how did they find it with their son the following day?

EPENETUS. Poor hearts, so far as prudence would let them, they discovered all tenderness to him; and though they did not tell him so, were glad and thankful to see him so well. He was present at family worship, when his father, with great enlargedness and affection, sent up strong cries with many tears on his behalf: his condition declared and pitied, many great and precious promises pleaded, the rich and glorious grace of God to the chief of sinners owned; and eternal salvation, and all the means leading thereunto, with holy thankfulness and humility mentioned: and that the glory of all might quickly arise and shine upon their dear child, earnestly desired. The poor mother was very glad to observe the Lord, the Giver and Hearer of prayer, so opening her husband's heart; but much grieved to observe all the while her son's heart shut up; for nothing could she discover but a sullen uneasy countenance.

NEOPHYTUS. Sure upon that young man there seemed to be marks of reprobation, his case was desperate; I should think it the duty of parents so tried and distressed, to make themselves easy, and trouble neither heart nor head more about such a perverse rebellious son. The parents under the law were to harden themselves against the rebellious son, deliver him to the magistrates, and witness against him that he might die.

THEOPH. All this is rash and severe, my **NEOPHYTUS**; you are no father. The marks of reprobation are not known, nor can any man living tell whose case is desperate. Christ says, that *all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven*; and therefore I will say, Why not this? And if it should grow still unto many degrees more heinous, I will say again, Why not that? It's well that God's thoughts are higher than yours, as the heavens are higher than the earth. As to the parents and their rebellious son under the law, did you ever read our dear *Ainsworth* upon it; and his large account of the Jewish tenderness upon that concern? **EPENETUS**, excuse us.

EPENETUS. His father set him to his proper business, which he also refused not. His father's countenance discovered the greatest concern for him and love to him, but his words to him were few, though much to the purpose. But he kept in for some weeks; and generally attended family-worship, though it appeared to be his burden; but never carried it as if he believed that his parents were his best friends; so after a while fell into his old courses, with seemingly greater greediness than ever, and boldness in sinning grew upon him.

THEOPH. This must be very trying; and what did his poor parents do then?

EPENETUS. They prayed for him, they reprov'd him, they reasoned with him from time to time; and it was upon one of those times, that one of their elders gave them a visit, and sharply reprov'd the rebellious youth, and received from him an obstinate answer, which a few weeks ago I gave you the account of. But quickly after that, all the elders and few of the brethren, upon the parent's request, came to spend a day in a prayer at *Gobeithiol's* house; and the son, though against his inclination, according to the strictest charge both of father and mother, was present all the while.

NEOPHYTUS. With submission, I earnestly desire some account of that day's work.

EPENETUS. Their principal business being with God, they thought the greatest part of their time should be took up in prayer. *Yefan* begun, and with an enlarged heart and tenderness; with warmth of affections and zeal, did earnestly desire the presence of God, the God of all grace with them that day: and that it might be a day to be remembered, and that the good and desirable fruit thereof might either immediately appear, or when more for the glory of God and their comfort and instruction: but the desirable fruit he absolutely prayed for, nor did he express himself like one that in the least doubted whether the prayer should be answered.

NEOPHYTUS. How could this be? he did not know the event: should not he have prayed with submission to the divine will?

THEOPH. In all things of a temporal nature, and as to many circumstances belonging to things spiritual and eternal, we are doubtless to pray so: but as to the salvation of the soul, pray where have we a precept for it, an example of it in any of the saints, or how can the nature of the thing admit of it? Suppose, I was to pray thus, Save my soul from hell and everlasting damnation, if it be thy will. If this does not imply a submission to the divine will, though the request be not granted, then the petition in this form is a contradiction in terms. But seeing it must imply that, then here's a man willing to be damned, willing to be hated of God and willing to hate God for ever, and willing to walk in those ways which lead to all this; does any part of God's will require this? And I must say, is it not against all that is revealed? And is it not against the very nature of the work of God in a converted soul? If I am to pray absolutely for my own salvation, why not for the salvation of my child? Have I no encouraging promises? And though I don't see my house so with God as I could wish, yet is not the *covenant ordered in all things and sure*? Does it not contain all my salvation and all my desire? And do I not desire

the salvation of my child? Does any thing in God's word require that I should be willing that God should hate my child; or that my child should hate God for ever? Could I submit to that, and yet be a sincere lover of God, and a lover of my child? No; God does not call for such a submission; nor does it become the *mouth* of a believer to say, O Lord save my child if it be thy will; nor his *heart* to go on to what must follow, If not, I submit, and am willing he should hate thee, and be damned. No; absolute prayers here glorify God, and become the saints; and they who annex no petitions upon things of such weight, *If it be thy will*, know not what they say. God requires it not at their hands. *I will not let thee go, except thou bless me*, is a language that becomes an Israelite indeed. We can't be willing to be damned, we can't be willing our children should: And whatever looks like a willingness to that, should be hated as hell; for nothing can dishonor God more. *Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee.*

NEOPHYTUS. I see it is not in vain, most excellent THEOPHILUS, that I have referred myself to your correction: I thank you for your condescending care, and with submission think I could feel what may be more tenderly laid on, Beloved EPHENETUS, proceed.

EPHENETUS. After *Yefan*, two ruling elders prayed in the same spirit, and much to the same purpose; and then *Dewi* read Eph. vi. 1. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.* And from that text gave that small assembly a very sweet discourse; aiming especially at the instruction and support of the parents, and at the conviction and conversion of their son. He observed how the Holy Spirit, in writing to the churches, the saints, the faithful, included the *children*, and often directly speaks to them. He observed, that God entrusts parents to teach, instruct, and *command* their children in his name. He observed, that it is the special duty of children to *obey* their parents so teaching, instructing, and commanding. He

observed, that as parents should require nothing but what the Lord requires, so that children in obeying, should in the first place obey the Lord, and then their parents as authorized by him, and commanding in his name. He observed therefore, that it was the special duty both of parents and children to *search* much into the mind and revealed will of the Lord, and conform themselves thereunto, or else neither the commands of the one nor the obedience of the other, could be said to *be in the Lord*. And lastly he observed, that upon such authority and obedience there is a great deal of beauty and glory; for *all is right*. Upon each of these he insisted, and took up as much time as he thought convenient. And then in a fervent prayer to God begged the divine blessing thereon, and the divine guidance in what yet did lie before them, as the designed work and business of that day.

CHRISTOPH. I wish each godly family had a scriptural evangelical discourse upon those observations, which now I also observe appear in the text; it might be of use to parents and children too. But pray what was there more to be done.

EPENETUS. The next thing they judged necessary, was to put some close questions to the young man, and get from him what answers they could; a short account thereof take as follows.

Yefan. I will take leave, *Cyndyn*, to ask you one question, which may open the way to more; Pray whose are you?

Cyndyn. No body's, as I know of, unless I am my father's.

Yefan, Brother *Gobeithiol*, whose are you?

Gobeithiol. I am the Lord's.

Yefan. I will put the question to you again; *Cyndyn*, whose are you?

Cyndyn. I did not think of what my father said, but if he is the Lord's, I am the Lord's; and besides, all things are the Lord's.

Yefan. Is your father the Lord's, think you, in no other sense but as all things else are?

Cyndyn. Yes I believe he is the Lord's in a sense different from what some other things are: for there are many persons who never gave themselves unto the Lord; and there are many things that can't: but I have heard my father give himself many a time to the Lord.

Yefan. You say, if you are any body's you are your father's; and did not you hear him give you to the Lord?

Cyndyn. Yes, I believe I have.

Yefan. Pray, brother *Gobeithiol*, what made you do so?

Gobeithiol. Sir, it was of his own that I gave him: I was helped to lay hold on the promise for myself and my child; for the Lord says, *I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee*: and upon that I concluded that I and my seed were his, and that I should make an unreserved surrender of myself and mine unto the Lord. And besides, the Lord says in his word, that my child was his *heritage*, so I thought it my duty and glory to give my child to him.

Yefan. And do you think, *Cyndyn*, that your father did well in this?

Cyndyn. Yes, I believe he did.

Yefan. Then you must think that you are the Lord's in a different sence from many other persons and things.

Cyndyn. Yes, 'tis like enough I am.

Yefan. Then pray why don't you give him what is his own?

Cyndyn. Sir, I keep nothing from him as I know of.

Yefan. He says, *My son, give me thy heart*; you don't give him that.

Cyndyn. Sir, you can't see what I do with that.

Yefan. That's your mistake; for *the tree is known by his fruit*; and if you gave your heart to the Lord, you would also *yeild your members servants to righteousness unto holiness*.

Cyndyn. Well, I hope I shall in due time give all to him.

Yefan. Now is the due time; and you have sorely sinned against God, in that you have not yielded up all to God long before now.

Cyndyn. Sure a poor young man may enjoy himself and the innocent pleasure of life a little.

Yefan. Self is Christ's enemy: and in seeking yourself, you do most certainly deceive your own soul, and deprive yourself of the best of pleasures.

Cyndyn. I know of no pleasure better than those I enjoy, if I could but enjoy them quietly: and what I don't know, I envy no body.

Yefan. Enjoy them quietly, you can't: whatever face, brisk and bold, you may put upon it, something of conscience will fly in your face. *Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.* How will you stand in the judgment? for you see you shall be brought there.

Cyndyn. I don't think always to live thus, as I said before, I hope in due time to repent and reform.

Yefan. And as I said before, the due time is now; and the further you go in sin, the harder you will grow and the more indisposed to repent. The Lord calls you now to repentance, and in his name, I do so: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Cyndyn. That's well; and I hope so I shall find it.

Yefan. But this hope of yours is a *hope that maketh ashamed.* Your godly parents are ashamed on't, we are all ashamed on't; and when it appears to you as no more than a spider's web, you will be ashamed of it too.

Cyndyn. It does not become me to say, that you should be ashamed to beat a poor creature out of his hope, and drive him into despair; but pray, sir, is not that your work?

Yefan. There is a twofold hope, one that shall perish; *as*, and at furthest *at* the giving up of the ghost, and this is the vain expectation of the disobedient; and from this hope I would drive you if I could, and it would be a mercy to you to be without it; but there is a hope of glory which all persons by nature are without, which stands in casting all upon, and expecting all from Christ in his way and under his yoke, and whoever has it purifies himself as he is pure; to this hope I desire you may be led, and in it fixed.

Cyndyn. But till I have this, I think the other is very useful.

Yefan. Only to drive you farther off from this: therefore now despair, and now hope.

Cyndyn. I am only averse to the word *now*, I oppose nothing else you say.

Yefan. And in opposing that, you oppose all.

Cyndyn. Sir, I oppose nothing at all but the present time: I am willing all that you desire should be hereafter.

Yefan. But that's your great mistake; you are not willing it should be at all: otherwise you would not stand out a moment longer. He that is willing is already turned.

Cyndyn. Well then if it must go so, willing I am not; and I desire you would be so favourable to me as to let me alone, that I may, in the way I chuse, enjoy as much pleasure as I can.

Yefan. To let you alone, so long as we can do any thing, would be so far from being favorable to you, that it would be downright cruelty. We know you are miserable, and we know that our gracious Saviour calls upon us to shew mercy to those in misery, and use all the means we can to relieve them; and we know that you are, in a special manner committed to our faithful inspection and tender care, and if we neglect you, to our Lord we shall be undutiful, and to you barbarous.

Cyndyn. I thought I was under the care of none

but my parents, or those to whose care they might commit me: but I think unto your care I never was committed.

Yefan. Your godly parents, when they visibly took the yoke of Christ upon them in church-membership, gave up themselves and theirs to God. They which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham, and they are heirs according to the promise given him: God promised to be his God and the God of his seed, which must include church-membership: and our Lord says, that the children of his people belong to the kingdom of heaven, that is, to a gospel church: therefore you need not wonder, that I should say, you are committed to our tender care. Our Lord himself has charged us to feed his lambs, and we have hitherto considered you as such a one, and you know how we have endeavoured to discharge our duty towards you: and you see how we are in the present discharge of it.

Cyndyn. I cannot think yet that you have any thing to do with me.

Yefan. As much as ever the church of the Jews had to do with those born therein; for we are grafted in the same olive-tree, and root and branches, as the Holy Spirit tells us, are considered as heretofore; and as our dispensation is brighter than theirs, by so much the more our love, tenderness, diligence, and zeal should appear in the discharge of our duty towards the children of the church; and towards you through mercy we have not been wanting.

Cyndyn. I should be very thankful if you please to let me alone.

Yefan. That time, though a very awful one, for ought I know, may be at hand. His condition was dreadful, of whom the Lord says, *He is joined to idols, let him alone*: and so was theirs concerning whom it was said, *Let them alone*.

Cyndyn. But I want to be so happy.

Yefan. Poor soul! my flesh trembles to hear you, and my heart is greatly distressed to see the tears of

your tender parents; and to think that their cries, tears, and entreaties should make no impression upon you, is very shocking. And still it is more so to think that the tender mercies of God, the love of Christ, and the blood of the everlasting covenant, should by you be trampled upon and despised. I again mention the immense treasures of love and grace in the gospel, in and through Jesus Christ, unto the chief of sinners every way free: as a poor perishing sinner cast all thereupon, and receive all for present happiness and eternal glory and welcome.

Cyndyn. And I say again, be so kind as to let me alone.

Yefan. I think I have made it plain to you, that you stand as yet in a relation to the church: and the church must, as a church, be acquainted with your obstinacy in a way of sin; and if you come not to the church to give in a repentance, they must doubtless judge that you are in the same case with him of old who despised his *birthright*, and as a rejecter of Abraham's covenant, will deprive you of all church privileges which belonged to you as the child of church-members, and cast you out.

Cyndyn. They may do what they will; I shall lose nothing by that as I know of. I should be glad if my parents would give me leave now to withdraw. However I shall say no more, but that I am sorry you gave yourselves and me this trouble.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, let my much-respected *THEOPHILUS* say what he will, this young man seemed to be such a one as God would have nothing to do with.

THEOPH. You would do as well to slack your pace a little: you run before God and man too.

EPENETUS. Upon this *Dewi* read that text, *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* And in a sweet tender discourse, with many tears, gave unto *Cyndyn* the best advice, put him upon every duty, called him to avoid every sin, and desired him to be at the next church-meeting, for they must take his case into con-

sideration. Then spoke encouragingly to the poor parents; and bid them hope to the end, they had grace to look to. Then he and the other elders, in a very affectionate spiritual manner, mourned and prayed, not as those without hope: but the heaviness of heart the parents were under cannot be expressed. So the work of that day concluded, without any appearance of the desired, the much desired fruit.

CHRISTOPH. However, upon the work itself there seemed to be a very great beauty. Such love, such care, such tenderness, such diligence in, and close application to the use of means, discovered the sincerity of their souls, and the glory of the christian religion. But I perceive they had not done with him. God's people must make a representation of his patience and long-suffering also; pray how did they go on?

EPENETUS. As they had opportunity, they did all they could to pluck him as a brand out of the fire; some would tenderly speak to him when they met him, others could not, but with tears in their eyes would give him such a look of pity, and a sigh enough to pierce a heart of stone; and they prayed for him; and all desired their children to beware. His parents, you must think, were always at their work: but to the church-meeting, when it came, they could not get him; but away he stole to places and company more agreeable to him.

But the day came, and after prayer, and opening some portions of scripture, *Dewi* said, Dear brethren, our glorious Shepherd feeds his flock, and gathers his lambs with his arms, goes before us, is our Rear-ward and surrounds us with his salvations. His love is wonderful; and among many other great and eminent instances thereof, it shines much in the charge he has given us to watch over each other in the Lord, and to exhort one another daily; and the charge he has given us concerning our children, is an evident and eminent token of his love to them. Church-membership, walk, and worship, is one of the ways wherein we are to ac-

knowledge God, and wherein we are to train up our children. They are the Lord's and therefore in his nurture and admonition we are to bring them up; and Christ bids us *feed* them, which must include the doctrine of his word and the discipline of his house. They are in the kingdom of heaven, as truth itself tells us, and therefore must enjoy the encouragements, and be under the laws thereof, to the utmost of what they may be thought capable. That we are found in any measure in our duty towards them is a mercy to us, is a mercy to them. Many precious fruits of this we have seen, and through the grace of God I doubt not but we shall still see. And though some trials in the discharge of our duty may attend us, let us not hang the wing and be discouraged, so long as we are but in the way of our duty. Under trials our God gives us leave to grieve, but not to be distrustful, nor slavishly dejected. There is a trial indeed upon us now; *Cyndyn*, the son of our beloved *Gobeithiol*, makes awful advances in the ways of sin and obstinacy. His sins are known to many of us; a particular account of them is neither necessary nor agreeable. All possible means, in a more private way, have been used to reclaim him, but he revolts more and more; despises the church of God and the care; and says we have nothing to do with him; and desires he may be let alone to enjoy his own pleasures. My flesh trembles so much as to think of, and therefore I shall not mention, the wicked expressions which with deliberation proceeded from him at his father's house, when after prayer for him, we were reasoning with him for his good. All the elders, and some of the brethren, were ear-witnesses thereof. The God of all grace have mercy upon him, upon his dear grieved parents, and upon us, and guide us in our duty further towards him: and this is what, as a church of Christ, you are desired now to consider.

Yefan. We should have been very glad if he had been here; perhaps the presence of a praying church, deeply concerned for him, might have made some im-

pressions upon his heart: Pray, brother *Gobeithiol*, why is he not here?

Gobeithiol. Sir, we could by no means prevail upon him to come; and he is gone I don't not whither.

Yefan. Dear brethren, what our beloved brother *Dewi* delivered concerning *Cyndyn*, is not a report that stands in need of confirmation; for in such a case evidences are always required, but this is a notorious concern, it is known to all of us, and under it we have grieved a long while, and to reclaim him from his sinful ways we have used all private means possible or probable. The case is now before you as a church of Christ, and it is evident that your grief is great. It is now my place to ask and receive your judgment upon your present duty towards him: and therefore if you do, as a church of Christ, think it your duty to admonish *Cyndyn* of his great sin, obstinacy, and disobedience to his parents, despising the church of Christ and his laws therein, and call him to unfeigned repentance and reformation, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did.

Yefan. Having seen and heard so much of his obstinacy, and suspecting he would not be hear, we thought it convenient to have an admonition drawn up in writing, which upon your approbation and order, shall be sent. It is thus:

The Church of Christ unto Cyndyn-ap-Gobeithiol, yet under our care.

The apostle in writing sent word to a christian lady, that he rejoiced greatly that he found of her children walking in truth: but we by this writing must tell you, that we are all greatly grieved, that you a child of such godly beloved parents belonging to us, should walk in ways of sin and wickedness, and obstinately persist in those ways, and despise and reject all christian entreaties, advice, and reproof. Oh! the many prayers put up, and the many tears poured out for you! Surely

the many precious promises given in the word, relied upon by the church, and very often pleaded by your godly parents, shall be performed! We humbly expect it! and we are told that *the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever*. At present our trial is great; your sins are uncommon. The everlasting covenant of God you have rejected, your birth-right you have despised, the easy yoke of the Redeemer you have refused, and even the external part of God's worship you have neglected, communion with God you have derided, your godly parents you have grieved, all means used for your good you have with all your might resisted, and the way that leads to all destruction has been, and is your stubborn and obstinate choice. Poor youth! what will you do in the end thereof! Oh! were you but sensible of the privileges you trample upon, and the pleasures you forsake! Were you but acquainted with the Redeemer's love, grace, peace, and pardon, how would you look to him whom you have pierced, and mourn! We pray for this, and shall continue to do so. But prayer for you is not the only means appointed for your good: reproof and admonition must have their proper place; and as a church of Christ we have judged it our duty to admonish you, and we do hereby in our Lord's name admonish you of all your evil ways, and call you to unfeigned reformation, and true repentance. Greatly desiring the blessing of heaven may attend this for your good, we remain your best, though grieved friends,—Ordered at our church-meeting.

Yefan. Brethren, if you do approve of this, and order it is your admonition to *Cyndyn-ap-Gobeithiol*, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they un-animously did: and after some time spent in fervent prayer for a blessing thereon, the meeting concluded. The admonition being signed by the elders, was delivered to his father to give him.

CHRISTOPH. Poor creature! how did he receive it? and how did it answer the end?

EPENETUS. His father fixing upon the best oppor-

tunity he could to give it him, with tears in his eyes said, Son, you have heard of the Roman senate, here's a letter to you from a greater assembly. The young man took it, and read it. It shocked him: he went into a private room; his mother looked after him, he read it again, then stood still for a time with the letter in his hand, then read it a third time, and shed some tears, put it in his pocket, and was some time before he came out of the room: and when he came out said nothing, nor could his parents say any thing to him.

NEOPHYTUS. Now I begin to think that some good and great work followed upon this. I thought I must have given him up for lost: but I see here's hope a dawning. Pray beloved EPHENETUS, go on.

EPHENETUS. He was present at family-prayer, and his dear father prayed with usual earnestness and many tears for him; not forgetting to be thankful for the love, care, and endeavours of the church, and that thoughtfulness which now appeared upon his poor son: but when he had done, could not tell how to speak to him; his concern and fear was such. *Cyndyn's* thoughtfulness continued for some time, but gradually wore off; and before another church-meeting he had sinned himself into greater hardness and boldness in the ways of iniquity than ever. And upon his parent's earnest entreaties that he would go to the church-meeting, he answered with a disdainful sneer, No, no, they may send me another epistle.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, still disappointed am I! what will the end of this poor young man be! But pray go on.

EPHENETUS. At the church-meeting his case and condition, with many tears and much concern, was talked and prayed over; and a second admonition was ordered; and it was to be delivered to him by word of mouth by *Didwyll* and *Diwyd*, two ruling elders. Who accordingly having found him, did their work faithfully; and being men of judgment and zeal, talked to him, after one of them had prayed, so closely

upon the great concern before him and them, that he wept much: but still they were afraid that his tears were not tears of repentance, but of reluctance and vexation: for his countenance appeared very sullen and unthankful.

NEOPHYTUS. How did the grace of God appear in them! and how did the corruption of nature discover itself in him!

EPENETUS. Alas; though the corruption of nature was suffered to break out awfully in that young man; yet you must think that even he was under restraints. One unrestrained sinner may destroy a country, and then destroy himself; the depth of corruption is past finding out. But though he was under restraints, his wickedness appeared more and more flagrant: he derided his father and mother, despised and reproached the church, and proceeded into very awful and amazing degrees of boldness in sinning. The next church-meeting, the church and elders took no further notice of him, than to pray for him with much concern, and under many tears; but before another meeting, the parents themselves desired the church might with all expedition proceed; for as the case stood now, he only grew worse and worse. But *Yefan*, and his master *Edgar*, went to visit him once more, they talked to him, they prayed with him, they exhorted, they entreated; but it is very shocking to think with what a stiff unthankful countenance he carried it toward them. And when he was told that the church must next opportunity consider their duty towards him, he with a sneer replied, So shall I consider mine to them when I think I owe them any.

However the church-meeting came, but *Cyndyn* would not come near them; they prayed, they wept before the Lord, and shewed a great reluctance to go to the separating work, it seemed to be their strange work. At last says

Dewi. Dear brethren, what a sore trial is this upon us! my heart sinks under the weight of it. *Cyndyn*

is obstinate to the last degree, our endeavours are all frustrated, and our expectations are slain; only we are yet in our duty, and who knows what the God of all grace will bring about! we are now fully convinced that further delays can but harden him, and give him in some sense a greater opportunity of corrupting and hardening others, and this to our grief in some degree we have already seen, upon poor *Anianol*, of whom I believe we must also take public notice quickly. Oh! may poor young ones avoid them. Our gracious Lord has given us laws, in the observation whereof we may in a comfortable measure keep ourselves pure. The measures and methods required, you through mercy understand, and you know that towards him we have gone through all but the last; and if any person present does think that we should not now proceed to that, freedom of speech is granted.—Upon your silence I then say, If you do as a church of Christ judge it your present duty to separate *Cyndyn* from that visible relation he has stood in to us hitherto, and if you do accordingly now actually in the name of Christ cut him off, and put him away from among yourselves, into the same case with heathen men and publicans, signify it by lifting up your hands.—Which they unanimously did, though with many tears. Then *Yefan* prayed for a blessing on what they had done; and *Diwyd* was appointed to inform him of it.

NEOPHYTUS. Really there was an awful sort of a solemnity upon what they did; and indeed I think there is nothing in the world so solemn as an organized congregational church acting in simplicity and plainness, according to the plain injunctions and laws of their King, without any of the pompous, yet vain inventions of men. But shall any of us live to see the churches take this care of their children, and thus discharge their duty towards them?

THEOPH. I don't know; of any present, you are most like.

NEOPHYTUS. But when shall it be?

PHILAL. When all the cruel clouds of unnatural objections, raised by unbelief, and retained by those who appear to be too much without natural affections, are dispersed by the Spirit of the Lord, and the church, in his light and according to his promise, brought to own infants in arms standing in a special church-relation. *Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. Isa. xlix, 22. And thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Isa. lx. 4. For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; then shall ye suck, ye shall be born upon your sides, and be dandled upon her knees. Isa. lxvi. 12.* And the nearer any church comes to this at present, the greater is it's glory.

SYLLOGIST. Indeed, sons in arms, daughters upon shoulders, and nursed at the side, and dandled on the knees, can be interpreted fairly of none but of children; and we see God himself declares their special relation to the church; and in a time to come, in spite of all the present carnal and cruel objections of those who look with an evil eye upon the gracious privileges Christ bestows upon the children of his churches, this shall be thankfully and cheerfully owned by all the saints.

NEOPHYTUS. But, dear **EPENETUS**, the account you gave of the young man has sunk my soul, but if you have any thing of an encouraging kind to relate concerning him, pray let us have it; for even his separation, awful as it was, it's to be hoped might be of use to him.

EPENETUS. When *Diwyd* informed him of it, he reasoned very closely with him upon it, and prayed him to consider his then present case, which seemed every way to be singular: and told him that their prayers should yet be to God for him. *Cyndyn*, with a countenance discovering indignation, heard him, but said nothing. His sinful companions which he chose,

now in a ranting bantering way welcomed him into their number, and told him they were glad he was a heathen man: said they, *Dewi*, who made your father a christian, made you a heathen; such power the vain man assumes: but your father is as much a heathen as ever he was, and you are as much a christian as ever you were: let them and their whims perish together. Come, *Cyndyn*, forgive them and forget them, they have done you no hurt, you know we are in the way of true pleasure, never dream of any thing to come, enjoy the present.

He made a shift to laugh along with them, but in the midst of his laughter his heart was something sad. He endeavoured by, and in sinful ways to make himself easy and merry; but there was something that stung him; he never could come at the same pitch of mirth with his companions. When his laughter was loud, and his countenance brave, they clapped him o' th' back as a lad of heart, and hopeful; but when a cloud hung, though but for a minute, upon him, they would banter him as a sneaking weak soul, inclining to be religious again. So that among them he had no great comfort, and at home he had none; for his mind was averse to religion. Nor had his parents any comfort in him; ever and anon he would threaten to leave them; and they were not very averse to let him go, though they said nothing: but send him away they would not. They locked up nothing from him, that was his, and also put something more in his way, that at any time when he pleased to depart, he might take with him what he thought fit.

One night he takes his opportunity, informs no body of his design, and away he goes. It was some little time before his parents knew that he was gone in earnest: but when they knew by examining what things were gone, and what things were left, no body can tell what distress they were in: but they went both to prayer, and you must think with many tears committed him to God, wherever he was. They prayed the

elders and some friends to come to their house, and keep a day of prayer as before; which they also did. But the distress of the parents was great. Sometimes they thought though they knew not which way he was gone, to search all Britain for him; at other times they thought they had committed him to God, and God knew where he was, and how to keep him and bring him home again. They were in a thousand thoughts a-day about him; and for many weeks, yea for many months, the sight of the bed where he used to lie, or the sight of any old thing that did belong to him, would make them cry, ready to break their hearts.

CHRISTOPH. O dear EPHENETUS. I have children of my own; you almost break my heart; do, pray, if you can, tell us what became of him.

EPHENETUS. Poor creature, he wandered up and down for some time, and had many thoughts of heart, but very few about religion, and providentially fixed at a town, called in that day *Llettyrdwr*, called so, because of houses of entertainment by the water-side, and from thence now called Bedford. There he fell into some little business, but very often lived upon the quick, which made him think, seeing he had no mind, to starve, that he must not live too fast; and that kept him out of many a snare. He was very backward to inform any from whence he came, but his carriage distinguished him from the vulgar, and some of the inhabitants guessed that he came from *Caerludd*. However, as I said, he was under a necessity of being sober, for he had not much to spend; and courteous, that some of the inhabitants might employ him in some little business.

THEOPH. Well, had his poor parents but know this, it would have been a great comfort to them: but, poor hearts, their grief and distress must be great!

EPHENETUS. There was one thing they used now and then to please themselves withal; in examining things, they found there was a Bible gone, which they hoped he had took with him; and upon the most

diligent search they could not find the written admonition which the church sent him: upon this, their hopes and their fears suggested many things to them, and drew many prayers from them.

NEOPHYTUS. Oh dear; you raise my expectation; May I not be disappointed!

EPENETUS. One day walking near the town, in one of the meadows, many thoughts crowding his now bewildered breast; distressed by most of them, and relieved by none; he sat down safe from observation and burst out into tears, and cried out, "O! most miserable creature, what and where am I? I would none of God's counsel, and despised all his reproof; and I now eat of the fruit of mine own way, and am filled with mine own devices. I despised the church of God, and I am cast out of it; the everlasting covenant of God I derided, and now I am a stranger from the covenants of promise; I dishonored my father and mother, and though they did not forsake me I forsook them; they worship God, and, unless grief over an undutiful son hinders them, may be now singing his praises, and I have cast myself out of all the way of worship and instruction. They may think I am dead and gone, and indeed I may well wonder I am alive: but hear I am the greatest sinner in the whole world, and yet live, for what end God knows, who only knows my distress. I am a greater sinner than any in hell, and wonder I am out of it; none there ever sinned as I have done. I have obstinately despised and opposed all the goodness of God and the glory of his kingdom. What shall I do? whither shall I go?" And he did cry and sob for a long while.

Upon this, he takes out of his pocket the *admonition*: for he had it by him, and read it very deliberately, and with many tears; and then cried out, "O their love and care! O my rebellion!" Then takes his Bible (for his parents were not mistaken, he had it with him) and reads, *Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led*

thee by the way? And now what hast thou to do in the way of Egypt, to drink the waters of Sihor? or what hast thou to do in the way of Assyria, to drink the waters of the river? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: Know therefore, and see it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of Hosts. Under the power of this he fell as one slain, and on the ground did lie in very great distress: for every part of what he had read bound him down, nor was he able to look up.

NEOPHYTUS. O poor creature! now he wanted *Dewi and Yefan*.

EPENETUS. Ay, ay, father or mother, or any friend; but here he was alone, no body near him but poor ignorant heathen-men, and his own mind filled with nothing but the most dismal apprehensions of things; and of returning to *Caerludd* he durst not entertain a thought.

NEOPHYTUS. Did he not pray in this distress?

EPENETUS. He durst not do that: he thought that if he spoke a word he should be struck to hell at once; but this heart was ready to break with desires, and he had something like groans that could not be uttered.

NEOPHYTUS. But what course did he take?

EPENETUS. He went home in the evening to his lodgings, such as they were, neither ate nor drink, had no sleep but distressing slumbers; ate very little the next day if any, and his great distress of mind fell under the notice of his acquaintance; who kindly asked him how he did? He answered, he did not know. He was asked whether he had the perfect use of his senses? He said, No, nor never had. They told him they thought he was under trouble of mind. He answered, Not half enough. One who seemed to be a more particular acquaintance than all the rest, desired him to take a walk with him; which he did. Says his acquaintance to him, whose name was *Ymgais*, Pray be free with me, and tell me what is the matter with you.

Cyndyn. That's more than I can do; for my concern is deeper than words can reach.

Ymgais. Then I suppose you think you have sinned in somewhat; but I have two things to tell you for your comfort: Your sin cannot be great, I'm sure; and I know a *Druid* who can procure your peace.

Cyndyn. And, distressed as I am, I have two things to tell you: Though you are not so sinful as I am, yet you are a great sinner; and all the *Druids* in the world can't help you.

Ymgais. Your sins indeed you know best, but none of my neighbours who have known me from a child will say I am a great sinner: but pray what makes you think so of me?

Cyndyn. Nay, I know it's true, though I don't say that you are a greater sinner than any of your neighbours; you all know better things than you do, and so you do not only sin, but sin against knowledge, which must make the sin a great sin; and of persons in your state it is said, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but imprisoned the truth, and liked not to retain God in their knowledge. And though you know the great God must be an infinite Spirit, yet you become vain in your imaginations, and change his glory into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; and sinfully think, that to torment and sacrifice some of those creatures, will satisfy the Eternal Majesty for your sins. And how can you dishonor him more than by entertaining such a base disagreeable thought of him?

Ymgais. I am amazed! I never heard such a talk in my life! Pray, where did you learn this?

Cyndyn. The eternal God has revealed his pleasure in word and writing unto the children of men, and though I am a very great sinner, he has favored me with that book, I have it in my pocket, and I will read some part of it to you:—And so read the sermon of Christ upon the mount, and Paul's discourse unto the Athenians.

Ymgais. O strange! what knowledge have you! my heart trembles! who are you? I wish I knew the book; will you teach me to know something of it? I have a private place where you and I may be together all day, without being disturbed, and you shall want for nothing. Will you please?

Cyndyn. Yes, whatever comes of me, I will do all that I can for your good.—So they fixed time and place, and spent many days together. *Cyndyn* had a small Catechism, which he made use of under *Edgar*, and was now of great service to him. And though the heaviness of his mind was very great, yet this work Providence had cast upon him was not only of great use to his new acquaintance, but to himself also: being employed in things that were still proper for him in his distressful condition.

CHRISTOPH. Poor creature! he discovered a principle of love and pity to poor sinners, and worked for their spiritual advantage, though he himself was under such distress and darkness. There are some in the world now, who know what it is to labour under a load, who yet are not willing to esteem their labour a load: But pray go on; for my heart begins to rejoice.

EPENETUS. But his heart for a long while was heavy, but now his labours were constant. He had much business with himself to inform himself, that he might inform others; for now he had not only *Ymgais*, but his family, and two or three more of their acquaintance under his daily instruction; he himself was no great proficient in divinity; he had neglected it too much, and had forgot much of what once he had took in, so now his labour was great with himself to recover what he had lost, and to inform himself of other things in the best manner he could; and his earnest desires after relief out of his distress, and some hope of mercy were constantly with him; and being well satisfied that his endeavours with those poor heathen-men could be of no use without the blessing of God, he thought he would, though under his load, pray with them and for

them ; and thought within himself that God might hear his poor wretched prayers for them, and also convince them, by that means, that prayer was a duty owing to God, and teach them how and after what manner it was to be performed. But his heart did so upbraid and condemn him, that he had much ado to bring himself to it ; and though to pray alone was his greatest and sorest task, yet God did bring him to pour out his heart before him, with tears innumerable and groans unutterable.

NEOPHYTUS. Well then, I hope his deliverance was at hand.

EPENETUS. But God was pleased to exercise him yet with distance and distress : it is not God's usual way to bring such people at once into comfort. But now he prayed, and seemed to be always at prayer, but always afraid lest his private prayers should be heard by any mortal.

THEOPH. Ay, I remember you told us, that when he seemed religious before, he used to pray aloud, knowing his voice must fall under observation, but now he prayed like one under a real work ; but such a teacher of divinity, with poor creatures to attend unto his instructions, I never heard of before. But pray how did he go on ?

EPENETUS. You know God does not despise the day of small things : his way was to read chapter after chapter to them ; and, ever and anon they would say, what's that ? sometimes he would tell them what he thought in a few words ; and sometimes he would say, I don't know, but I wish some people as I know were here to tell you and me too. Then he would read on again, and when any of them pleased, he was again in the same manner interrupted : This was the mornings work ; but in the afternoons their business was with the catechism ; and explain it to them in his way he did ; and then put some questions to them as to their faith and experience : and in a little time, they told him that they renounced heathenism for ever, and

saw themselves ruined and lost by reason of sin; and with the mouth confessed Christ, the Son of God, yet the Son of Man, God Man in one person, as their only Saviour from sin. But there was one of them that one time told him, that he believed for his part, he was too great a sinner to be saved, and with many tears cried out I'm undone, undone. Poor *Cyndyn* went to speak comfortably to him, and mentioned that text, *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* But as he mentioned the word to comfort another, beyond his own expectation his own soul was relieved, his fetters fell off, his steps were enlarged, and his lips were opened to shew forth the praises of his Redeemer. Oh, how did he speak of his love and blood! and how did he before them all loath himself; he lift up his voice and wept, and bid them not be cast down, for his tears were tears of joy, he never had felt such joy and such mourning in his life, and they with him shed tears in abundance. It was a very endearing, instructing opportunity to them, which they never afterward forgot.

NEOPHYTUS. Oh EPENETUS, now you touch me! What is this the young man I gave up for a reprobate! Is this the rebellious child? Well, let me never wholly give up any of the seed of the godly any more, how dark and discouraging soever a cloud may rest upon them! Whenever I see the children of the godly, I hope I shall think of our dear Lord's words concerning them: *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little-ones should perish,* Matth. xviii. It is evident he speaks of little children, because the words were spoke upon the occasion of his taking a little child and setting him in the midst of his disciples.

THEOPH. Well spoke, NEOPHYTUS, for one who is not yet a father. Pray, EPENETUS, proceed.

EPENETUS. Now he went about his work more

cheerfully ; and as he sojourned now in *Ymgais's* house, he told him, that family-worship, night and morning, was the duty and the glory of all christian families, and that all christian families in *Caerludd*, did so worship in the beauties of holiness, and that his dear parents of whom he could not speak now without many tears, fervently and constantly attended thereunto. He was desired then to go before them in family-worship, which he did, and several of the neighbours were generally there, which made the house like a little church ; and with them all *Cyndyn* was free in the things of God, and with precious success his poor endeavours were attended. But *Ymgais* himself was his bosom-friend, who eminently profited in the christian religion, greatly encouraged his young teacher, and was a great blessing to his neighbourhood.

CHRISTOPH. But did not *Cyndyn* greatly want to return to *Caerludd* ?

EPENETUS. He did so ; and was always talking, on every opportunity, of *Caerludd*, of the blessed church of Christ there, of his father and mother, and other friends : but though he greatly desired it, and a greater blessing he thought under heaven he could not desire, yet could never bring up his heart to a resolution of returning ; the thoughts of his deportment there, his being cast out of the church as a vessel wherein was no pleasure, his forsaking such tender pious parents, which he knew must add much unto the grief which, from time to time, he had brought them under, would so fly in his face. Sometimes he would think of the prodical's words, *I will arise, and go to my father* ; but then he thought, if his father frowned upon him, it would kill him ; and if he received him kindly, it would break his heart ; the first he deserved, the second he could not stand up under.

However, *Ymgais* having informed himself of *Cyndyn's* father's name, and that the christian assembly *Cyndyn* talked so much of, met for public worship somewhere near *Dwrborth*, now called *Dwrgate* or

Dowgate, one day says to his wife, I am going a journey, be kind to *Cyndyn*, I shan't be very many days before I return; and said no more, so set out. It was not long before he got to *Caerludd*, staid at his inn that night, and next day being the first day of the week, for he ordered it so on purpose, he inquired which was his way towards *Dwrborth*. When he came near there, he inquired where the christian assembly used to meet, found the place, and sat down, expecting to see what he never saw in his life; a christian church worshipping their Redeemer.

Anon the place began to fill, the persons all of them had gravity and seriousness in their countenances; but when the church began their worship in singing, for in those days they entered the courts of God with praise, *Ymgais* was so filled with holy amazement and heavenly pleasure, that he could hardly stand under the weight thereof. To see and hear men, women, and children singing the praises of their God; some with tears of joy, others with the most cheerful yet serious countenances, made him wonder where he was, whether in the body or out of the body, and whether he was not unknown to himself got to heaven or no. When singing was over, *Yefan* prayed with wonderful judgment, zeal, and affection, and then preached; upon all which there was, as the stranger thought, very great glory; and when worship was over, says *Ymgais* to one that was next to him, Pray Sir, is there one *Gobeithiol* in this assembly? Says the other, My name is so? and I am the man. Says *Ymgais*, Sir, I am a christian; and live in the country; and should be very glad of some acquaintance with you. Says *Gobeithiol*, Pray, sir, go home to dinner with me, and my wife here. Which he did, and many thoughts of heart he had, how to tell them the story that was upon his mind. Having entered the house, and sat down, says

Mwynedd. Pray, sir, how do they do at and about *Hyfrydle*, for I suppose you came from thence, and

how is *Ffyddlon* and *Cywir*, and all our dear brethren and friends?

Ymgais. Madam, I don't come from thence, I come from *Llettyrdwr*.

Gobeithiol. Oh, dear, what and a christian! you make my heart rejoice exceedingly; I never heard of any christians there.

Ymgais. We are but a few of us, and but very lately converted.

Gobeithiol. How is it with you in your soul as to faith, comfort, communion, and holiness?

Ymgais. Ah! dear sir, my faith is very weak, my comfort but low, and every thing answerable thereunto. But this day——

Gobeithiol. Well, a very great mercy it is to have any measure of that great work; where it is but begun, we are confident it shall be finished to the day of Christ: Not very many years ago, I had none of that work in my soul.

Ymgais. And not very many months ago I had none of it, and yet I think God begun upon me the *first* in our neighbourhood,

Mwynedd. Pray, sir, by what means?

Ymgais. Madam, by means of a young man that came to our neighbourhood, and fixed providentially among us.—But upon this mentioning the word *young man*, they both withdrew, for some time; and when they returned, he could see how it had been with them. Afterwards their words were few; but what talk they had, both at dinner and after, was savoury and useful; and when they went out the afternoon, they desired he would sit with them, and return with them. In the afternoon *Dewi* preached, and every part of the worship unto poor *Ymgais* was attended with exceeding glory. When worship was over, *Gobeithiol* goes to *Dewi*, and says to him, Pray, sir, step into our house as you go by; which he accordingly did. Says

Gobeithiol. Sir, this gentleman is a stranger, but

a christian ; he knows nothing of *Hyfrydle*, he comes from *Llettyrdwr*, and I thought it convenient you should have a little conversation with him before he goes out of town, so I desired you to step in.

Dewi. My dear brother, I thank you ; and to you, my dear christian brother, though a stranger to me, I do with pleasure testify unfeigned love, and am heartily glad to see you : Pray, how long have you been a christian ?

Ymgais. It is now several months ago since I was convinced of the vanity of heathenism ; and I was some time after then, before I had doctrinal acquaintance, in any good measure, with the person of Christ, the design of his coming into the world, and work he went through in the world for sinners ; and when I saw my own lost and undone condition, it was some time still before I could say that I believed in Jesus Christ ; and I bless the Lord for this day, I never had such a day in my life.

Dewi. I never heard of christians at *Llettyrdwr*, but I rejoice now to see and hear a christian from thence. Pray, what number may you be ?

Ymgais. About five or six of us, I hope love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dewi. Pray how did christianity enter amongst you ? Who was that preacher of the gospel God made use of to sow the seed of the kingdom at *Llettyrdwr* ?

Ymgais. Really sir, I never saw nor heard a preacher of the gospel, before this day ; but God in his providence sent a person amongst us, who, after some time, proved of great use to us ; and for him we shall bless God to all eternity.

Dewi. After some time : what, did he not fall to his work, as soon as ever he came ?

Ymgais. No sir ; not till after several months, and it was with me he began.

Dewi. You make me very eager to hear this story more particularly : pray how was it ?

Ymgais. Why, sir, a young man came to our town, and took a mean lodging not far from my house; so he was most days more or less, under my observation, and he and I contracted a sort of an intimacy; he kept no company, but in a still quiet manner would do any little business people would employ him in, often took solitary walks in our fields and meadows, with a countenance generally much dejected, which made some of us think he was melancholy. But upon one very extraordinary time of distress upon him, I asked him to take a walk with me, which he did; and I told him I thought his mind was distressed about some sin, but I had two things I told him to mention for his comfort; first, that he was a young man and could not be a great sinner; and secondly, that I was acquainted with a *Druid* that could procure his peace. And he replied, Distressed as I am, I have two things to tell you; though you are not so sinful as I am, yet you are a great sinner, and all the *Druids* in the world cannot help you. And 'twas thus our discourse began, and thus the work of God began at *Llettyrdwr*.

Dewi. Now because this was a young man, sister *Mwynedd*, the very thoughts of what you have gone through renews your grief; but I am ready to say to you *refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears; there is hope in thine end, and thy child shall return again to his own border*: And who knows but this may be your son?

Mwynedd. Oh my dear pastor, do not raise any such expectations in me!

Dewi. Why really not unlikely; but I myself am afraid to ask any thing further, upon so tender a concern; but yet I must: Pray, sir, what was his name?

Ymgais. Sir, you make me afraid to tell it; his name is *Cyndyn*.

Mwynedd. Oh *Cyndyn!* *Cyndyn!* not my *Cyndyn* sure! too much, too much——Sinks away——

Gobeithiol, under many tears, takes her up——and after some time says, Come my dear, you don't know

what may be in this story ; let us examine into it more particularly, in a temper and resolution composed and resigned ; and in all be still, and know who is God.

Mwynedd. Oh you dear christian stranger, don't deceive me ; Is he my son ?

Ymgais. Madam, I really think so.

CHRISTOPH. Oh, my dear EPHENETUS, this story comes a little too close to a tender parent !

EPHENETUS. Well then, let tender parents guess at the rest of it ; and I shall only say, that many of the godly in *Caerludd* rejoiced greatly that evening ; the poor parents for joy had not a wink of sleep all night ; messengers sent the very next day for *Cyndyn*, and with them a godly gifted young man, to stay with, preach to, and assist the few christians at *Llettyrdwr* ; with all expedition possible *Cyndyn* came, fell down at his parents' feet, who did not let him lie there long, wept on his neck, spoke comfortably to him, blessed God, called the godly elders, and many brethren together to worship God and give praise, ordered fresh apparel for him, and they began to be merry.

The very next Lord's day, it was thought fit he should give some public account of the dealings of God with him, and his work upon him and by him, and it was a very great day unto them all. He was then according to his own desire proposed for fellowship. Poor *Anianol*, another rebellious son, and now under our public admonition, was present, and in hearing *Cyndyn* was melted and converted, and with many tears spoke briefly of the grace of God to him, for he could not refrain though he was not called to it, and humbly desired the elders would propose him also. And accordingly the next church-meeting day was a very full one, they both spoke their experiences of the work of God, and to the great joy of the church were received.

Cyndyn lived an eminent blessing to his parents and to the church ; and *Anianol* carried it so in a close walk with God, at home and abroad, that his humble

holy prudent conversation, accompanied with all diligence in every duty, did in the hands of the Spirit of the Lord, effect a great change in his father, who had been cast out of the church; and after a while he, under many tears, gave the *Elders* an account of the grace of God to him, and humbly desired to be proposed for fellowship in and with the church; accordingly he was proposed, and in due time re-admitted, and there was great joy before the Lord, on the account of this also.

THEOPH. So we see their trials, though bitter, were over-ruled to bring about sweet and precious comforts to them; and so it shall be yet with the saints. Dear **EPENETUS**, we thank you, but I think that some few weeks ago, you mentioned some trials they met with, or were like to meet with, from persons stiffly maintaining some dangerous opinions; and *Yefan*, in his visits, once had some concern with them: Pray do you remember that?

EPENETUS. Yes, yes, there were two sorts of them springing up; such as denied the glory of Christ's person, undertaking, and work directly, or by necessary consequences; and such as thrust out the law of God, and denied the proper necessity of obedience thereunto; and with both they had a great deal of trouble, but by the mercy of God they kept them under: The first did lie smothering under restraints, until *Morgan's* time, called *Pelagius*, and then was suffered to spread itself far and wide; the second has been all along a trial, more or less, to most churches like a scabby scorbutic distemper in the skin and skirts of them; which I believe, though it has a pernicious tendency, God will never suffer to spread and become the reigning evil of any nation, professing christianity.

THEOPH. And shall we, God willing, next opportunity, be favored with some account of the church, guarding itself against such opinions, and dealing with the authors and abettors of them?

EPENETUS. If the Lord will, and if something that may be thought more convenient does not offer itself. So dear brethren, neighbours, and friends, may all true comforts attend us and ours.

THE END OF THE EIGHTH DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE IX.

One of the private Meetings greatly disturbed by two erroneous Persons, Deddfol and Digyfraith. Their ensnaring Letters to a young Christian. The first of them called before the Elders: his Letter read: he denies imputed Righteousness, is for a new Law; denies the Satisfaction of Christ; and denies his Divine Nature: obstinately persists, and is sharply reproved.

CHRISTOPHILUS.

WELCOME my brethren and friends; though I have been here but a few minutes, yet I began to think them long without your company.

PHILALETHES. Why truly we might have been here a little sooner: only calling upon our neighbour SYLLOGISTICUS, for his company, there was our NEOPHYTUS, and three or four more, engaged in a sort of an enticing debate, upon the sagacity of birds, beasts, reptiles, and insects; and if I had not put them in mind of our time, and of our stated and yet unfinished business, you must have stayed longer without them.

NEOPHYTUS. My dear CHRISTOPHILUS, from some observations I had made this day upon some of the feathered kind, I told my friends that there appeared seemingly, a great deal of wisdom and sagacity upon them; and some of my neighbours here said, that my words implied that they were all rational creatures, acted from a deep contrivance and design of their own,

and consequently must have immortal souls; and in some state or other must always live. Now, I said nothing of all this, not did I say there was wisdom and sagacity *in* them; but that a great deal thereof appeared *upon* them: And this can imply no more, than that there is a supreme All-governing Mind, that concerns himself in their affairs; and without him there is not a sparrow falls to the ground.

THEOPH. Well, well, at present let us pursue this no further; we have another business to attend upon; you see our EPHENETUS is present, and you may remember what was purposed and promised the last time.

NEOPH. True, so I do, and it was the remembrance of that brought up this. It grieved me to think that the children of men, with all their rational powers, should be wandering stars, or that any of them should be so; when all other creatures about us, do, all things being considered, with what appears amazing discretion, chuse and keep to that which is the very best for them. Each particular kind and nation of them, seemed fixed upon that which is the very best for themselves, and act now in all the steps they take, just as their ancestors did a thousand years ago. But man, we must say indeed *fallen* man, unstable as water; so many men so many minds; and often of the same man, it may be said, so many months in so many minds; his unsteadiness may be as amazing as the stedfastness of the other creatures put under his feet. And this giddiness is not confined to the low affairs of time, but extends itself to the great concerns of religion, faith, and worship. *Ross's View of all Religions* I have read; did that man trow, do the world justice?

THEOPH. He is long since gone to see whether he did or no; but in the matter you mention you run to some excess, which upon reflection may afford you another instance of the weakness of the human minds; there are many thousands of the children of men that appear discreet in choosing, and steady in pursuing

things just and honorable ; and as for all the converted ones in the world, whatever weaknesses may attend them, God's fear shall be so fixed in their hearts, that they shall not turn away from him.

NEOPH. I hope you don't think that I deny this: In all that you have spoke, the grace of God should be thankfully owned ; and in what I have said, a humbling consideration offers itself to fallen man ; which the godly who appear most established in the truth, may improve to a good purpose. It is the God of all grace that does establish, strengthen, and settle all those who appear *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord*. But oh fallen man ! how mean and uncertain ! how light and how vain ! If God is not pleased to ballast him by his grace, every wind of doctrine carries him about.

PHILAL. Right, my dear NEOPHYTUS, and I have often thought, that solid judicious established christians, are, by the grace of God, sent as very great blessings unto the churches where they are planted ; but the giddy and uncertain minds, who are ready to be weary of old established truths, and greedy of *novelties*, are great trials to the churches, wherever they ramble.

SYLLOGIST. But God has wise ends in suffering them ; and though they are distressing trials, God will over-rule and turn all into refreshing mercies, unto those churches that are found in the way of their duty. By such trials have they prospered. Pray, EPHENETUS, how was it formerly ?

EPHENETUS. I remember how we concluded last time ; and now I suppose you expect from me some account of trials and grief in the church at *Caerludd*, arising from persons not sound in the faith.

NEOPHYTUS. True ; our beloved EPHENETUS, we do so.

EPHEN. It is now a considerable while since I told you, that there were several private meetings of conference upon the things of God, set up in places most

convenient. The order of those meetings I gave you a short account of. There were two men, the name of one of them was *Deddfol*, and the name of the other was *Digyfraith*, who generally attended one of those meetings: They were two very differently minded, and being both of them forward talkers, a great deal of time they used to take up, to very little purpose; instead of short useful observations upon the revealed will of God, or a brief account of late experience; they chose a confused noise and vain jangling, to the grief of several solid christians present: and being much conceited of their own abilities, would give place to none.

NEOPH. But you said there was a person chosen monthly to preside in those meetings; could not he command order, or their silence?

EPEN. Haughty tempers are not very forward to submit: they thought they knew what to speak and when to speak, and judged that others should think it worth their while patiently to hear them.

NEOPH. Sure that meeting could not subsist long.

EPEN. Several indeed of the serious christians, for a time forsook it; but there were others given to curiosity, who came and constantly attended, so that the meeting was fuller than ever; and to keep them within the bounds of sobriety, and make some just observations, in order to what he thought might after then become necessary, *Diwyd*, one of the ruling elders, was constantly there; and out of civility to him, was frequently chosen to preside. The pastor and teacher understanding how things went desired he would always be present and do all the good he could.

NEOPH. And pray, what did he do for their good?

EPEN. It was his place very frequently to pray, either first or last; and in prayer he would always mourn under a sense of their present confusions, complained to God of the great loss they sustained thereby, desired God to give them the wisdom which is from above, pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be en-

treated; and always earnestly begged of God, that he would by his gracious Spirit promote love, establish peace, and lead into all truth. In their heat of talk he would always interpose, cool any passions appearing, moderate and remove the consequences they would fasten upon one another, endeavour to reconcile them to the truth and to each other; tried to make them believe the difference was more in words than things, being very willing to hope the best concerning them both; used in great tenderness to treat with them, and at times would flatter himself that every thing disagreeable was at an end, and would tell his pastor or teacher so; at other times, things in debate would appear of a threatening kind, then would he entreat pastor and teacher to take their turns in christian visits, which they also did, sometimes with a greater, and sometimes with a lesser prospect of success.

NEOPH. It is much they did not put down the meeting.

EPENETUS. They could not see that could be of any good consequence; whatever looked like lording it over the heritage they knew could be of no real service; and beside, they could set up another, or disturb either or all the other private meetings, which without them enjoyed tranquillity and edification: Wherefore they advised *Diwyd* still diligently to attend, and do all the service he could to the interest of the Redeemer.

NEOPH. What methods did he take besides those you mentioned already?

EPEN. He often repeated the mentioned methods; and often in a solemn manner would speak to them as he thought the case required. What under much concern he spoke to them one time, you may take as follows:

Brethren, it is known unto several of us, what pleasure and comfort we have many a time enjoyed in this place. Here we have melted and mourned at our Redeemer's feet, and here have we rejoiced and

triumphed in his salvation. Under his shadow have we sat with delight, and his fruit has been sweet to our taste. While scriptures were opened, some principle of divinity considered, and experiences related, how have we been strengthened and revived, and longed for the returns of the like opportunities ! but our glory is in the dust ; the weak in the faith are stumbled, and all are grieved who are truly concerned for the life and power of religion. The enemy is broke in like a flood upon us, nor do I as yet see the standard of the Spirit so lifted up against him, as to chase him away. Love begins to cool, and we may be very sure iniquity abounds. In all our contentions about truth, the spirit of truth does not appear. God has a controversy with us, in suffering such a sore trial to come upon us. It becomes us to mourn and repent, I'll endeavour to bear my part with you in that work, and let us agree that the next meeting here, shall be a meeting *only* of prayer, for that very end. Who knows what our God will please to do for us?

The time came, and was kept in prayer with many tears before the Lord ; but neither *Deddfol* nor *Digyfraith* was there ; however the truth lost nothing by their being absent. There was a young man present whose name was *Hygar*, a very amiable christian, and very inquisitive after every truth ; with him they both in their turns had been tampering, in order to make a proselyte of him, and he seeing them both despising the time of prayer, and humiliation before God, said,

“ Fathers and brethren, I am thankful for this opportunity : God is amongst us of a truth ; and I own before you that I am bound to bless his name, who has delivered my soul from death, and kept my feet from falling, that I might walk before the Lord with his people, in the light of the living ! Those two noisy persons, by despising prayer, discover what acquaintance they have with that God who gives it and hears it. I am but a poor youth, but I humbly think that it is no part of our duty to hear them wrangle any more.

They have both in their turns spread the net for me, and endeavoured to bring me over to their thoughts, but the spirit of the Lord has mercifully kept me. I have a letter from each of them in my pocket, which our honoured elder *Diwyd* may please to read in the hearing of you all."

Accordingly the letters were read, and the contents of them abhorred by all present; and it was resolved, in the strength of the Lord, to guard against them both, as persons of pernicious, though of different principles, and of designs base and dishonorable.

NEOPHYTUS. If possible, I humbly desire the contents of both the letters.

EPENETUS. He whose name was *Deddfol*, wrote thus: "My dear and very much beloved *Hygar*: It is with a great deal of pleasure I considered your uncommon attainments; your close and profitable application, your diligent inquiry after truth, the great zeal you discover for virtue, and how all your practice is a pattern of every thing honorable. You raise my expectations, and I trust you will never disappoint them. You are well acquainted with the nature and necessity of moral actions, commonly called good works, and you know that virtue is a reward to its self. If virtue was not to be rewarded with glory hereafter, yet every wise man would pursue it here: How much more then, seeing we are sure, if we hold out to the end, we shall for it have an abundant entrance into eternal happiness; *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.* Persons who despise moral virtues and good works, are surely great strangers to true pleasure at present; and unless they have good works to produce at last, shall be dismissed to eternal darkness; *I was sick and you visited me not. All must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, where they shall receive according to the things done in the body.* It is true, we are said to be justified by faith, and so we are to take faith for a work and a virtue; and so the scriptures tell us, that Abraham was

justified by works; and our Lord himself tells us, that by *our* words, which in a large sense intend the abundance of the heart, and the works we may be concerned in, we shall be condemned or justified. I am for giving unto Christ his rectoral glory; he is a person great above all angels and men, and he has done great things for us, has laid a good example before us, and has given a very equitable law unto us; and I am for ascribing grace unto him, who accepts of the sincere obedience of faith, though as yet imperfect, imputes it to us, according to his mild and gracious law, for righteousness, crowns our virtue continued in, with glory. Oh, what grace is this! What proportion is there between our obedience and the reward! This is grace that secures, demands, and establishes all that can belong to the glory of God, our present and eternal good. I have many things to impart to you at time convenient, but by what I have briefly written you will be able to know what judgment to form of the teachers preaching in general, and of some particular things in what the pastor delivers. Press on and improve. Your reason is not a rule to be despised: consult it, comply with it, and you will honor him that gave you such an eminent share of it, and secure for yourself all true esteem from the wise and virtuous, and upon your perseverance, eternal felicity. All, the earnest desire of yours in true affection," &c.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, what an enticing, ensnaring thing it was! It pleads for all virtue, is for giving glory to Christ, and for ascribing grace unto him, owning that he has done great things for us: A christian truly had need watch and pray.

THEOPH. Aye, my dear NEOPHYTUS, that's right; for there are many that lie in wait to deceive. A christian should always put on, and keep on the whole armour of God, that he may be able to stand in the evil day, praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit. There are many things in the letter you have had the account of, very much like truth, and

yet upon thorough examination, it may perhaps appear that there is not one part of it but what is against the truth as it is in Jesus. And even in our day we have, more the pity, a great deal to the same purpose, from the pulpit and the press; and more pernicious, because dressed up in a manner more agreeable to the polite taste of the age. But pray, **EPENETUS**, give us the other man's letter.

EPENETUS. The other man, whose name was *Digyfraith*, wrote as follows. "Dear *Hygar*: The great attention you seem to give to what I deliver at the conference, encourages me to pay my respects to you in such a manner as this. And moreover, from my very first acquaintance with you, I have thought the grace of God was your delight. I must say it is mine, and I love to hear of nothing else; and indeed it is not needful we should hear of any thing else; for by grace we are saved. It is unfeigned fervent love puts me upon writing to you, lest you should by any means be entangled with the yoke of bondage. What persons call our sins, were long ago satisfied for and washed away. There is no iniquity nor perversness seen in us nor upon us: nothing of that kind is in any sense reckoned to us. Christ finished the transgressions and made an end of sins; and according to God's covenant they are remembered no more. He has, by once offering up himself, for ever perfected all that are sanctified or set apart for him. Our liberty is complete, and in it we shall stand fast. How can it become us to cry and mourn and confess our sins, when we have none that can be truly called ours? They were reckoned to Christ and they became his, and are no more ours. And whatever those acts or defects, as some people may call them, may be, they have not in them the malignant nature of sin; for they work for our good; for all things together do so; and should a believer be in bondage, bemoan himself, and mourn over that which really does him good? I know I used to be in bonds and trouble heretofore; but it was because I knew no

better. I am at perfect rest night and day, whatever I do disturbs me not, and whatever I omit is no grief unto me. Every thing is best as it is; then why should I be concerned? I am thankful in every thing, and if at any time a thought passes through my heart, that I am't thankful enough, I am also thankful for that, and for the occasion of it; for all is best. I don't know any law I am under, nor can I then be justly esteemed a transgressor. Love is all my law, and he that feareth is not perfected in love: perfect love casteth out fear; but God's love to me is perfect love; why should I fear, and what can I want more? I pity poor weak whining people, who yet would be called christians; I trust you are of another growth. Our teacher delivers many things very well; but really the pastor often grieves me. Oh that he did but see things in the same light as I do! But by what I mentioned you may know how to judge of them both: and receive what you like best. But I hope another opportunity to let you know more of my mind: for, filled with earnest desires after your established peace, I am, yours," &c.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, if a young man may speak, this was a base insinuating letter, but surely could not ensnare so readily as the other: for here all virtue is neglected, and repentance trampled upon; a serious person, a man should think, was in no danger to be caught with this.

THEOPH. But this, for all your haste, had very plausible pretensions. Christ bearing our sins; the Lord well-pleased for his righteousness sake; the law magnified and made honorable; complete satisfaction made; a complete discharge thereupon; and such like things of great importance; but here, I must say, sorely abused. In short, the good men who heard both the letters read, might very well abhor their contents, and vile design: for though they were like Samson's foxes, tail to tail, having different views, they had fire-brands fixed to them. But how did *Diwyd* conclude that little opportunity?

EPENETUS. He gave *Hygar* the best advice he could before them all; and with leave put both the letters in his pocket.

NEOPHYTUS. Pray, what advice did he give?

EPENETUS. After some short remarks upon both the letters, he said, my dear *Hygar*! God has made me very glad through his work. It is owing to his omnipotent grace that you have been delivered from such destructive principles as both the letters contain. I think it will not prove a very difficult task to any man of judgment to make it plain, that the authors of these letters deny the Lord that bought them. Oh, what reason have you to bless God! nets were spread for your soul; and you are escaped. Bless the Lord while you live. I hope the Spirit of the Lord will abundantly help you to search the scriptures, and to compare spiritual things with spiritual. He is also the spirit of prayer, and I hope will help you to pray without ceasing for all guidance and establishment; and I trust he will lead you forth so long as you live, by the footsteps of the flock. By-paths may seem to have something inviting belonging to them, but as you would avoid the hook, beware of the bait. How agreeable soever a new thing may appear, bring it to a thorough trial by the law and the testimony: if upon the strictest examination it is not according to that word, it belongs to the kingdom of darkness; and in this work always consult ancient christians, of an honorable character, the elders of the church, especially the pastor and teacher, before ever you do so much as mention it to any body else, and desire them, according to the knowledge they may have in the scriptures of truth, to give you their judgment thereupon. See that you be always clothed with true humility, filled with earnest desire to do the will of God, having his fear before your eyes continually; for God giveth grace unto the humble, and if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God; and we are very sure that *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.*

THEOPH. If all who profess religion were to take this advice, what peaceable flourishing churches should we have! But there are too many who covet to be remarkable; and at that they cannot come without being singular; and seeing they cannot in the trodden path appear singularly eminent, strike out into a by-path they will, where they are pretty sure, such is the wretched condition of fallen man, to have some admirers. Many poor and pitiful pretenders to singular knowledge and wisdom, have with pleasure stroked themselves, when a few of their followers have cried them up as the *Gnostics* of their day; like those frothy filthy wretches of old, who gloried in that name: and in return they have admired their followers, and complimented them with the same character; and always, by them, the solid christian who steadily walks in the midst of the paths of judgment, is derided and despised as a person of a very mean taste, if a christian.

CHRISTOPH. With a daring mind, bravely to bid at things singular and out of the way, is with them, or in their esteem, true greatness of soul. What is common, affords their minds no entertainment. Our first reformers, and even our martyrs, some of them will grant might be honest men, but of very little acquaintance with true native freedom of thought, and the bright dictates of reason, say some; and as others say, men they were of very little light. But oh, my dear friends and brethren, may we see that blessed spirit unto an encouraging degree, appear upon the professors of the day, which did shine with eminent brightness upon them! Even without that greatness the present generation boasts, may we see their religion revive, their holiness, their humility, and zeal. Persons are seldom very great, who imagine themselves so; and yet a great deal of the greatness of the present age stands therein.

NEOPHYTUS. But according to what **THEOPHILUS** said, they who turn out to by-paths, must know that they forsake the right; and what comfort then they

can take in being admired, is what, I hope, I shall live and die a stranger to.

PHILAL. The secret springs of such turns upon the minds of men, may be many and various ; but when once they do with pleasure converse therewith, and flatter themselves with more in their pursuit, they will not receive the love of the truth, and thereupon they are left to believe a lie. But poor souls, who are deceived by them, may in the simplicity of their hearts acquiesce in what they receive as true ; and therefore greater charity is to be extended towards the ensnared, than to those who spread the net and catch with guile.

SYLLOGIST. It is foretold that churches should meet with such trials ; from among themselves men should arise speaking perverse things, to draw disciples after them ; but the *heresies* that spring up, are and shall be so over-ruled, that the solid approved christian shall under greater brightness be made manifest. How did the grace of God shine in the preservation of that young man, our beloved EPHENETUS mentioned !

NEOPHYTUS. I must own it is a comfort to me to hear it. I am young myself, and very weak, but through grace, I hope, I desire to say always to my Redeemer, *Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel*. I would be thankful for the very sure word of prophecy, for the promise, inhabitation, and operation of the Spirit of Truth ; and also, as I have often said, I bless the Lord that I sojourn at Potheina. But pray let me hear what method they took with those two men at *Caerludd* ?

EPHENETUS. I told you that *Diwyd*, with *Hygar's* leave, put both the letters in his pocket ; and now I must tell you, that the very next day he shewed them to the pastor and teacher, who immediately sent for the elders sought God with many tears, mourned under their trials, desired the divine directions, and then consulted what to do ; and after consultation they agreed to meet as elders, not forbidding any of the

church that might desire to be present, and seek God, and reason with *Deddfol* upon his principles.

The day being come, and *Deddfol* present, *Yefan* begins in prayer, mourned before the Lord under a sense of deep deficiencies attending them in the work of the ministry, that they had been far short in explaining and establishing the blessed truths of the gospel, which might in a sense be the occasion of their present troubles; owned the wisdom of God in suffering trials of such a kind to spring up; but earnestly desired the mistaken ensnared brother then present might be convinced and recovered, and that they might be guided in all meekness of wisdom, to reason with him for his conviction and recovery; and that the eternal God would graciously look down upon them, and by his almighty power work effectually by them for that end.

Prayer being ended, *Dewi* said, Brethren, the enemy of our peace and comfort, has many methods and deep devices to disturb and interrupt the blessed work of our Redeemer's kingdom: and we wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high things: Wherefore great need we have of the whole armour of God. Our common enemy can transform himself into an angel of light, and perhaps then we may be more ensnared. Our gracious Father has given us a blessed *rule*, whereby we are to try every spirit, and in his greatest wisdom he has made it our special duty to search the scriptures: and our Lord himself, who suffered being tempted, has given us an example how to repel the enemy's temptations: *It is written*. Some trials from persons guilty of a disagreeable walk we have had, and through grace have been helped in obedience to our Redeemer's revealed will, to be found in our duty, towards offenders with encouraging success. We little thought ourselves in any danger from disagreeable tenets against the truth, and therefore per-

haps on that side were not carefully guarded ; but of late we are awakened and called to defend the everlasting gospel, and use all our endeavours to recover such, as unwarily are turned aside after Satan. And I trust, that according to our poor petitions put up to God, we shall be graciously answered, guided and blessed. Providence has ordered it so, that we need not be detained, upon an enquiry what the things are we have to charge our brother *Deddfol* here present with : The principles now maintained by him, into which he also endeavours to draw others, you shall have under his own hand,——*reads his letter*—— The contents of this letter we shall endeavour in scripture-light to consider. Only, brother *Deddfol*, do you own this to be your letter ? And is this letter according to your present judgment ?

Deddfol. Yes, the letter is mine, though I don't think it very fair it should be made thus public, I own it, and declare it is according to my present judgment ?

Dewi. There is nothing in the letter which forbids the making of it public ; and if there had, it would have been the duty, notwithstanding, of him who received it, to ask advice upon it, and make it public. We apprehend the things contained in it, to be very erroneous and of a very bad consequence, and things, which we are all to a man bound to oppose ; and therefore it was *Hygar's* duty to let us know them ; and be it known to you, that it is your duty to renounce them.

Deddfol. When I am convinced of them as errors, no body need tell me then that it is my duty to renounce them ; but so long as I apprehend them to be truths, I shall think myself a transgressor to let them go.

Dewi. When you gave yourself visibly to the Lord, and unto us in church-fellowship, you did before many witnesses own and profess your lost undone condition by nature and practice ; that you could by no means do any thing towards fulfilling the broken law of God, or satisfying offended justice for sin ; that Christ him-

self was the complete Saviour, that the spirit of Christ had made you willing to receive Christ, to lean on him alone by faith, and live to him alone in all evangelical holiness, and all through and according to the richest grace of God; but in this letter all this seems to be cast off.

Deddfol. You say I seem to cast off all this, but every thing is not always as it may seem to be at first view; if you consider all the things you mentioned, over again, perhaps they may seem capable of a rational and favorable interpretation. But whatever comports not with reason, in what I might formerly have said, I think I should without delay depart from, and shew myself a man; I heard others talk after that rate; and if without examination I fell into the common road, it's what others besides me have done; but high time both for them and me, upon more mature consideration, to chuse the path of judgment.

Dewi. Whether you have, upon what you call mature consideration, chose or forsook the path of judgment, I hope we shall freely, fairly, and impartially consider. The scripture tells us, that we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: but you say we are justified by works, therefore I think 'tis plain you have forsook the path of judgment.

Deddfol. When I say we are justified by works, I do not mean works in every respect perfect, answerable unto a severe law that will make no manner of abatement; for I am sensible, that so no flesh living can be justified.

Dewi. You have all the liberty you can desire, to explain yourself.

Deddfol. Then I say, that we are justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: that we are justified by faith, and yet according to the scriptures, I see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

Dewi. In this you seem only to put us off with

expressions of scripture unexplained ; I pray you, again. to tell us what you mean by each of these.

Deddfol. I mean neither more or less, than that we are justified in the same manner as Abraham was, of whom it is said that he was justified by works ; his faith, which is a work, though not the only work of a pious man, being reckoned to him for righteousness, and it was freely by grace through Christ, that the rigour of the law was relaxed ; gracious terms provided, and such obedience as Abraham could perform, most graciously accepted.

Dewi. What did Christ obtain for fallen man ?

Deddfol. Mild and gracious terms of life and glory, most justly fitted to his present state.

Dewi. What did Christ do, in order to obtain those mild and gracious terms ?

Deddfol. He did whatever God the Father required ; and thereby became our gracious Lord and Law-giver. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye him.*

Dewi. Pray, what are those mild and gracious terms ?

Deddfol. Only faith, repentance, sincere obedience, and perseverance.

Dewi. What is the law that requires them ?

Deddfol. The gospel.

Dewi. What is faith ?

Deddfol. A sincere assent to the truth of all that is recorded concerning Christ.

Dewi. And how does faith justify ?

Deddfol. As an act of ours, in obedience to a gospel precept which requires it, and so in concurrence therewith, do all other concomitant graces ; for let faith be never so sincere, without other works it is dead and can't justify.

Dewi. From whence comes this faith, and the concomitant graces ?

Deddfol. Christ graciously procured room for it ; assists and works upon our rational powers in a per-

suasive merciful way ; and in receiving and improving his kind assistance we make way for more, and so far what is properly called our faith, is his gift. The other concomitant graces are produced in the same manner.

Dewi. Have all people those gracious assistances you mention ?

Deddfol. All in a sufficient manner and measure to make them happy, if they thankfully receive and improve them.

Dewi. And have they all sufficient power to receive and improve those assistances ?

Deddfol. Yes, they have all of them, if they are but willing to exert it.

Dewi. Pray are you a justified person ?

Deddfol. So far and so long as I fulfil the terms which Christ does require, I am ; but complete justification is not till the day of judgment.

Dewi. And how do you expect to be justified then ?

Deddfol. In the same manner as now, with the additional fulfilment of the term of perseverance, or continuance in well doing ; for you know I must expect to receive then according to things done in the body, whether they be good or bad.

Dewi. And pray what is your present state ?

Deddfol. A state of trial ; I am a probationer, and as I quit myself in this state, and persevere, so it shall go with me at last.

Dewi. Are you not under bondage and fear in this state of probation, for fear of miscarrying at last ?

Deddfol. No more than I am of a distraction ; for while I have the free use of reason, I shall fulfil the terms required.

Dewi. At present I shall ask you no more questions ; but upon what you have already answered I must in the first place, as your pastor, charge you with perverting and abusing the scriptures. You have said, that according to the scriptures, Abraham was justified by works ; and though the scriptures say that he

was justified by faith, yet you say that's the same thing, for his faith was a work. You know very well, that we are not at present considering what that is which justifies us, or what that is which justifies our faith before men, but how are we justified before God. The design of the Holy Spirit by Paul, was to shew how Abraham our father was justified before God: for what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Rom. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6. But the same Holy Spirit, by James, tells us how Abraham was justified before men, and that was by his works and obedience, whereby he evinced his faith to be unfeigned; for there were some professors in James's days, who boasted of faith, who despised good works, nor had they any to shew; which made the apostle say, *But wilt thou know, oh, vain man, that faith without works is dead?* Was not Abraham our Father justified by works, when he offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.* James ii. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Deddfol. This establishes what I say, that he was justified by works; his faith, or his obediential act of believing, being reckoned to him for righteousness.

Dewi. That's impossible; for in the first place, the Spirit of God makes it plain, that Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith; and if you take it for the act of believing, it must be understood that Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith. By faith, there, must be meant something that may be opposed to any work of ours, or it can never be under-

stood ; and then, in the next place, the very same thing that was imputed to Abraham is imputed to all believers, for it was not written for his sake alone, that *it* was imputed to him ; but for us also, to whom *it* shall be imputed if we believe ; but his act of faith can never be imputed to us, neither was it to him, but that which his faith fixed upon. Romans iv. 23, 24.

Deddfol. But James having asserted that Abraham was justified by works, says, that so the scripture was fulfilled which says, that *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.*

Dewi. No, he does not say that so it was fulfilled ; but says, that notwithstanding what he had asserted, concerning Abraham's being justified by works, was very true in the sense he intended it ; the account of his justification by faith before God was also true, and that work of his in offering up Isaac was an evident testimony to it, and token of it. What you call your complete justification by works at the great day, is no more than an open acknowledgment and acceptance of the good works done *in faith* ; and an open abhorrence and rejection of all done in unbelief. All who worked in faith will enjoy the apostle's wish, of being found in Christ, not having their own righteousness ; and all who worked to the last in unbelief, shall meet with such a reward as they and their works deserve.

Didwyll. It is very plain, that our open acquitment, when times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord, shall be according to the richest grace ; and 'tis evident that Abraham was justified long before he offered up his son Isaac, but, honored pastor, with your leave, I charge *Deddfol* with downright enmity against the holy and blessed law of God. He says, the law of God is relaxed, which I think borders upon blasphemy ; and he asserts, that we are under a sort of a law which does not require a perfect obedience, but will be satisfied with something far short of that, which I think is no less than establishing iniquity by a law, and charges this upon our Redeemer ; and

upon all this he puts a harmless face : but I am persuaded, we cannot easily dive unto the depth of darkness belonging to this pernicious principle. Brethren, the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good : and if I may express myself so, I would call it a *transcript* of the divine breast, where men may see what God is, and what they ought to be. The divine perfections must not be injured, and therefore there must be no relaxation of the divine law. The holy perfect law of God makes unto our minds a just representation of the essential righteousness, purity, and holiness of the divine nature, but a relaxed law can never do so. Such laws, where they are found, manifest the weakness, imprudence, and instability of their contrivers ; but to charge the eternal God with either of these, must be shocking to any rational mind. It is certain, that without a righteousness every way adequate to the eternal moral law of God, there is no going to heaven ; and it is certain, that such a righteousness we have in Christ. It is certain that no transgressor of that law can be saved without satisfaction made to law and justice, and it is certain that all the children of men are transgressors, and not a man of them can satisfy for the sins of his brethren, nor for his own ; and yet it is certain, that full satisfaction is made by Christ for all his people, and they shall have an abundant entrance to glory through him, who is already entered as their Forerunner. It is certain, that it is the duty of sinners who hear of Christ, to believe in him ; and it is certain, that the perfect law of God demands this : and unto this, all the precepts of God in the Bible may be justly referred. It makes my flesh tremble to hear persons making void the good law of God, and in the room thereof fixed a fictitious one of their own. *Deddfol*, I here charge you with a horrid design of overturning both law and gospel.

Deddfol. Sir, I have no such design, but I must be of the apostle's mind, that where there is a change of the priesthood, there must be also of necessity a change of the law.

Didwyll. You were charged with perverting scripture before, and with it I charge you again. Pray what priesthood belonged to the eternal moral law of God as such? The angels of light are under that law, and pray who is their priest? God, under a former dispensation of his covenant, delivered unto his church various statutes which belong'd unto the external part of the worship of that day; and to disobey him in those Levitical institutions would have been a breach of the moral law of God: when that priesthood vanished, according to the appointed pleasure of God, and Christ, an High-Priest for ever, having an unchangeable priesthood, is preached unto us under the present and clearer dispensation of the same covenant; it was necessary that God's present institutions, respecting his worship, should take place, and our observance thereof is a duty we owe to the eternal moral law of God.

Deddfol. Pray, sir, where does the moral law command faith and repentance?

Didwyll. Give me leave to ask you, which is the great commandment in that law?

Deddfol. I will take leave to answer in our Lord's own words: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; this is the first and great commandment.*

Didwyll. Well then I must say, that if I am bound to love him so, I am bound to believe in him; and if I am bound to love him so, I am bound to repent if I sin against him.

Deddfol. I should have told you, that the second commandment is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Didwyll. And upon it I must tell you, that if I am bound to love my neighbour as myself, I am bound to love myself. And if I am bound to love myself, I am bound to lay hold on every thing that can be for my real good: then when I hear that Christ is the Saviour of sinners, I am bound to lay hold on him.

Deddfol. But though unto you those things seem

included in the moral law, yet such is the present state of man, that he stands in need of another law, and a very mild one too: and doubtless, the gospel is that law.

Didwyll. Then Paul could never have said, that by the gospel the law was established; he must have said, that by the gospel the law was disannulled; for a new law must thrust out the other. And he might have said, that there is a law given that can give life, and that righteousness is by that law; but he positively says the contrary, Gal. iii. 21. And besides, the law which you imagine, is a meer contradiction in terms, and destroys itself; for it permits and suffers imperfect obedience, wherein must be disobedience; so iniquity is permitted by it, and so it destroys itself. And pray, what a law-giver must he be, who is the author of it? He must be the author of sin; but that Jesus Christ our Redeemer can't be; therefore he can't be the author of this law.

Yefan. Pray, *Deddfol*, please to favor us with some of those reasons that prevail upon you to think the gospel is properly a law: yea, to affirm with a *doubtless* that so it is.

Deddfol. Sir, it is often so called in scripture: we read that the isles should wait for Christ's law; and we are commanded to fulfil the law of Christ; and pray, what can be meant by the law of faith? and the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? Don't we read of those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus? Is not justification a judicial act, and must therefore be by a law? Does not the gospel give a right to its benefits upon believing? And in a word, will it not be a rule of judgment at last, and therefore must be a law?

Yefan. Law is a word of various acceptations: By the law of God, we are sometimes to understand precepts and injunctions given to the children of men, with sanction binding to obedience, or undergo threatened penalty. This is strictly a law. But often by

the word *law* we must understand *doctrine* or *instruction*, and so it is intended where it is said, the isles should wait for his law : that is, for his doctrine. So *the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* You see that the Spirit of the Lord tells us, that by law is meant the word of the Lord ; that is, any doctrine contained in the revealed will of God ; and in this sense the gospel may be called a law ; but not a body of precepts, renumerative promises, prohibitions, and threatenings. But to wait for Christ's law, or doctrine, is the same as to sit at his feet and receive of his words. We own that we are under the law to Christ ; for the law is in his hands, and may be justly called the law of Christ ; but by bearing one another's burdeus, and so fulfilling the law of Christ, nothing can be intended but our tender and loving carriage towards each other, in imitation of Christ who bore our burdens. The law of faith is the *doctrine* of faith ; and the law of the Spirit of life, is the power and efficacy of the Holy Spirit subduing the law or the power of sin. Disobedience to the gospel is a despising the doctrine wherein it is contained ; a rejecting of Christ, the sum and substance thereof ; refusing to submit to the moral commandment, which requires love to Christ out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. That justification is a judicial act is not denied, grace imputing unto us a righteousness that answers the demands of the violated law of God, and God is just in justifying all found in Christ. That the gospel gives a right unto its benefits upon believing, is a dark cloud drawn over the gospel, wherein faith itself, as well as all other benefits, is freely and graciously promised ; and whereby we learn that according to the true intent of the promise, faith shall, in God's way and time, be graciously and faithfully wrought, and every other benefit given. The rule of judgment at last, will be the eternal moral law of God : the various degrees of *revelation*, wherewith persons were favored or followed, impartially and per-

fectly considered. And the apostle says, that according to his gospel, that is, his doctrine, it should be so.

Deddfol. Then taking the law in the sense you understand it, there will be no possibility for any soul to stand in the judgment; for *in many things we offend all*. This very consideration renders a mild law absolutely necessary; and as I have said before, doubtless the gospel is that mild law.

Yefan. All found in Christ at the day of judgment, will have a righteousness adequate to all the demands of the law, without any abatement: and according to their desire, the rest shall stand or fall as they deserve, without respect of persons. Therefore there is no necessity there should be a new and mild law; for he that believeth in Christ hath a complete righteousness to answer the old one; and he that believeth not, shall be condemned even by your law, as mild as it is.

Dewi. There are reasons many and sufficient, why the gospel can be no new law with sanction; for law and gospel are, and must be specifically distinct; if of grace, then no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. If the gospel is properly a law, how come sins against it to be pardoned, and the sinners relieved? Was Christ under that law to deliver them that are under it? Or do they satisfy justice themselves for their own sins against it?

NEOPHYTUS. Dear EPHENETUS, you surprise me! This man they were reasoning with was a *Neonomian*! I could not have thought *Neonomianism* had been so old?

EPHENETUS. And truly you surprise me! What, did you never read of the Pharisees? It is evident they did not place their righteousness in perfect obedience, but in what they esteemed sincere. Were they not sensible that their own righteousness was weak? Did they not endeavour to establish it? Had they not a righteousness short of what was perfect, whereunto they trusted? And did not our Lord tell his disciples, that except their righteousness exceed that of the Pharisees, they

could not enter into the kingdom? Was not Paul's doctrine charged with licentiousness? And who do you think laid that to its charge, but the *Neonomians* of that day?

PHILOLOGUS. There was a rabble abroad under many names, who, if they were for any law, were for a new one: they appeared very early, and under many shapes continue to this day; but though, as **EPENETUS** tells us, this error gave some disturbance unto the first church at *Caerludd*, yet he who in Britain was first suffered, under a sore frown upon the churches, to spread this pernicious error, was *Morgan*, otherwise called *Pelagius*; he appeared upon that work of darkness about the year of Christ 410; and turning the gospel into a new law, is charged upon him as one of his grand heresies: and from the *Pelagians*, it is said, the Papists have took up this principle.

EPENETUS. It is certainly a very old error, as is evident from the epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians; and doubtless a very dangerous one, as is plain from all that is said in those epistles against it: but I was going to tell you that *Dewi* having said, Do they satisfy justice themselves for their own sins against this new law? the elder whose name was *Diwyd*, said, With your leave, my honored pastor, I must observe that *Deddfol* is not for satisfaction to divine justice for any sin. This is evident from this letter, where he owns that Christ has done great things for us; and he declares that he meant thereby, that Christ gave us a good example, and an equitable law. Unto my grief I have had more opportunity of knowing him than perhaps any body else present; and I have often heard him slight and despise the very word *satisfaction*. I have heard him say, it was beneath the divine goodness to insist upon it, and impossible for Christ to make it for others, if insisted upon.

Yefan. I am afraid it is so: Errors generally go in clusters. When one enters, seven more attend it. To deny satisfaction for sin, is to deny God and Christ,

and rob us of the great distinction between the christian religion and that of all others in the world. The thing intended by the word is the scope and design of all divine revelation. There we find that man who was made upright, sinned against God; and *by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*: all sinned in him their natural and fœderal head, and derive from him a depraved polluted nature; so that they are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin. And there we find, that poor wretched sinners chuse to continue sinning against God; nor will they seek him, the carnal mind being enmity against him. There also we find, that God is so just and holy, that evil shall not dwell with him; of purer eyes than to behold evil; that he will, as a righteous God, take vengeance, and will by no means clear the guilty; he hath also engaged his veracity and faithfulness not to leave sin unpunished: *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the words of the law to do them; he shall surely die.* But there we find the amazing love of God; and in this it was manifested towards us, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we might live through him. *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins; even Jesus which delivereth us from the wrath to come.* And there we find after what manner this amazing deliverance was effected: *He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. For what the law could not do because it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us: For Christ also hath once suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. He loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. He gave himself a*

ransome for all, to be testified in due time. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. He was delivered for our offences, and God spared not his own Son, and by his death we were reconciled to God; for if one died for all, then were all dead. And in divine revelation we find that upon this the righteousness of God is declared for the remission of sins; reconciliation being made for the sins of the people, and all who believe, receive the atonement; for being justified by faith, we have peace with God; who says concerning Christ, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

What, *Deddfol*, deny all this, and own yourself to be a christian! Let us hear plainly how it is with you upon this important concern?

Deddfol. I have, I think, duely considered the doctrine of *satisfaction*, and I must own, that for several reasons I cannot come in to it. I always think, that whatever clouds the grace and love of God should be rejected. The scriptures insist much upon the love of God to the penitent, and upon his grace in forgiving their sins; but if he must receive satisfaction, pray where is the grace which you often tell us is so much to be admired?

Yefan. The divine perfections must not be injured: God is infinitely just, as well as infinitely gracious; and whatever vain man may imagine, God will be just in justifying or he will never justify. What then? Is it impossible he should be gracious also? Is it impossible for mercy and truth to meet together, and righteousness and peace to kiss each other, in the salvation of sinners? Does not the Spirit of the Lord tell us, that we are justified freely by his grace, and yet that it is through the redemption that is in the blood of Christ? We have done nothing to procure our pardon; nor can unconverted sinners so much as desire it: and is it not amazing grace that it was in God's heart, when our hearts were shut against it? Did we think of a Saviour? Did we desire one? Was it not infinitely wise grace,

that found out the way of our salvation; that pitched upon Christ; covenanted with him; gave him to undergo what we deserved; and accepted of him in our room? Herein is love indeed!

Deddfol. It is certain, that with God there is nothing impossible: power belongs unto him; and it becomes us to sing and praise his power; and may we never think meanly of the Almighty. We justly esteem those persons truly great, who freely and generously pass by offences, without demanding satisfaction; and the scripture says, it is their glory to pass by a fault, and many thousands there are who do it and merit praise. And can they do what God cannot do! if it is true greatness in them to forgive freely, what is it in God to insist upon satisfaction?

Yefan. When did he insist upon satisfaction, which he himself in wise grace and love did not find out and accept? God can do nothing that implies any weakness or deficiency; God cannot lie, and therefore he cannot pardon sin to the injury of his own righteousness and veracity. Man can change his mind, and 'tis often commendable in him that he does so, but God is infinitely perfect and cannot change. It is true greatness in God to proclaim himself *The High and Lofty One*; but it is true greatness in man to say, *I am less than the least of all the saints*. God is the Judge of all the earth, and will do nothing but what is right; and however private and personal offences may seemingly be passed by among men, when at the same time the offended person may have several springs of satisfaction in view, pray what sort of a judge must he be thought to be, who dispenses with all law and justice, and like *Gallio* cares for none of those things? But even among men, if a person injured, and his family injured, unto a degree inconsistent with their comfortable and useful subsistence, and if it is in the power of that person to do himself and family justice, I will venture to say, that if he does neglect it, he will be looked upon as a mean-spirited unjust person,

Deddfol. But I am resolved, for ever to keep at the greatest distance from an opinion, that charges God with cruelty: He delighteth in mercy; and is it possible that he should so insist upon satisfaction for the sins of a poor worm! And still more amazing, is it possible that the God of compassions should be so cruel as to inflict punishment upon the innocent!

Yefan. All the worms in the world cannot make him satisfaction for one sin. Lebanon is not sufficient to burn before him, nor all the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. We don't say, that he comes to a poor sinful worm and insists upon satisfaction, but in the gospel he proclaims the glory of his wisdom, love, and justice, in requiring, providing, and accepting a sacrifice for sin, which all the world of men and angels could neither offer nor find out: his own beloved Son, on whom he laid the iniquity of us all, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him. Say not that this was cruelty, it was our Redeemer's free and voluntary offer; *Lo, I come to do thy will, a body hast thou prepared for me.* I am grieved to hear you abuse the doctrine of the gospel, and insinuate, that we affirm that God insists upon satisfaction from a poor worm, when we say, that he has provided a sacrifice, and is satisfied. But he insists upon your submission thereunto; and in his name, and as his servant, I tell you so.

Deddfol. Submission to God is what I am for; and that's one thing that makes me displeased with the doctrine of *satisfaction*; for I can't help reasoning thus, That if my sins are satisfied for, then all is over and gone, I need take no care how I live, how I walk, nor how I act. I need not trouble my head about faith nor repentance, nor is there any necessity I should obey at all; for all disobedience is already cancelled, I cannot sin one sin that I am to be accountable for. I must say, so long as I love obedience I must hate such a doctrine.

Yefan. According to what you say, you don't love obedience at all: for if you thought that you were safe

from punishment, you would not think obedience necessary. You think your sins are not satisfied for, therefore you will obey; and by your obedience satisfy for your own sins; ascribing that to your own wretched performances, which you deny the Redeemer, who became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Of him it is said, that he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; and you say, if you were redeemed, you would wallow in all iniquity. The holy designs of redemption you oppose, your own pitiful performances you trust, and expect great things from; and distrust, and in effect deny, him who is God over all blessed for ever. But seeing the design of Christ's death was not to satisfy Justice for the sins of the people, pray what was the design of it?

Deddfol. He died as a glorious martyr for the truth of his doctrine, and to give his followers an example how they must do in the like case.

Yefan. And was the agony of his soul for this? Did any of his followers that have yet suffered martyrdom, cry out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death?* Would it be the glory of any one of them to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Was it the pleasure of the Lord to bruise him for this? And could this be the meaning of our Lord's giving himself a ransom for others? Is this all that is meant by his redeeming us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us? And is this all that is intended by his washing us from our sins by his own blood? Can you instance in any one that died as he did? And can you think it the duty of any, or do you think it possible for any to suffer as he did? And should they have the same ends in suffering as he had? Must they be as *passive* as he was, having it in their power to cast their enemies in a moment to the ground? He said he laid down his life when no man did or could take it from him; must we do so? We grant, his blood is the blood of the everlasting covenant, and that all

the truths thereof are ratified thereby, and that in his patience, meekness, and readiness to undergo all the will of God, was also an ensample for us. We are called to feed the church of God which he has *purchased* with his own blood; and I say again, as his servant, I call you to submit your soul to him; which I think is the properest food I can at present offer to you.

Addfwyn. With your leave, my honored teacher, I have one thing to observe, which I think is of great importance. You have now twice here mentioned the *deity* of our Lord Jesus, but *Deddfol*, I think, believes it not. There may be many different apprehensions concerning religious things which require forbearance in the tenderest love; the errors you have reasoned with him upon, are certainly intolerable ones; but this that I now charge him with is most intolerable. He denies the Lord that bought him, and the Spirit of God calls that a damnable heresy. In his letter he says, that Christ is a person great above angels and men; which, as it stands in that letter, I am confident implies a denial of his eternal deity. He is here present, and I humbly move he may be called to speak plain to that important article.

Dewi. An important article indeed! Take away Christ's divine nature, and our faith is left without a foundation; for we dare trust in none but in the Lord JEHOVAH, in whom is everlasting strength. In the scriptures the divine nature of our Redeemer is plainly and plentifully asserted. Unto the Son he saith, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* Of Christ it is said, when he ascended on high, *The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; JEHOVAH is among them:* and upon his entrance into heaven, *The Lord saith unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right-hand. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.* These things said Esaius, when he saw his glory and spake of him. We are called to sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, who should be for a sanctuary to some, and a stone of

stumbling to others ; by the Holy Spirit directly applied to Christ, *the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, JEHOVAH our righteousness; the Son of the living God. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten of the Father; who said, before Abraham was, I am. I and my Father are one.* It was unto him the disciples in faith said, *My Lord and my God.* And it is said, that God purchased the church with his own blood. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us. All shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; as it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. *Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh: the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us. All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made; he that built all things is God; God over all, blessed for ever. The true God and eternal life. The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

As my dear brother *Yefan* said upon another head, I will say upon this; What *Deddfol*, deny all this and own yourself to be a christian! Let us hear plainly how it is with you upon this important concern.

Deddfol. Sir, I am very well persuaded that Christ is truly great and glorious, beyond any thing that I can express. None among the sons of the mighty can be compared to him. Angels and principalities are under his feet. Whatever may be said to the potent or powerful, grand or glorious in this world, either in itself, or in conjunction with all things else that may demand any share in such characters, must be looked upon as the small drop of a bucket or the small dust of a ballance, in comparison of him. And if it is possible, that the shining worlds above us, of magnitude

immense, should be filled and furnished with inhabitants of superior glory, as for aught I know they may, Christ is still unspeakably above them. And if we could further imagine many millions of worlds a thousand times more magnificent than any thing that has yet entered our thoughts, they must not only be in subjection to him, but be reckoned as nothing compared with him. It is true, the angels of light must be creatures glorious and potent, beyond what we can conceive, but none among those morning-stars like the Son of righteousness. *He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.* His nature, whatever 'tis, is *superangelic*; and as he is above them, so he was before them all: and unto him we may grant any glory, but that of an infinite, eternal, underived, and independent being: For it's impossible that of such there should be more than one. How great soever, and how glorious soever Christ is, yet he and his glory must have a beginning; and I am sure I can never honor him more, than by giving unto him just what is his due.

Yefan. This is plain, but very shocking. You say, that great as he is, a beginning he must have, and by the eternal underived Being he must be made and brought into being.

Deddfol. I do say so: for seeing he is not that One underived Being, which he says is greater than he, then he must be made, and his being must have a beginning.

Yefan. Then, I pray, how can you receive what is said of him, *that all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made?* Whatever was made he made it, and therefore if you believe the scriptures, you must believe that he had a being before all created beings.

Deddfol. Reason is an eternal rule that all scripture must be interpreted by, and where it accords not with my reason I pass it by. And my reason tells me, and so must yours, that there can be but one underived being.

Yefan. And so does revelation. But this infinite, eternal, underived Being, who knows himself, tells us, that in that One essence or being there are Three, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One. Three persons, in one infinite, eternal, underived, independent Being. What though your reason, bright as it is, cannot comprehend this? Is it not highly reasonable you should believe the account God gives of himself?

Deddfol. But there can be but one God.

Yefan. It is readily granted; and Christ is that one eternal God.

Deddfol. Then the Father is not the eternal God.

Yefan. Christ says, I and the Father are one.

Deddfol. I grant Christ to be exceeding high and glorious: but he cannot be the one eternal God.

Yefan. He is very often in scripture called so; the essential name JEHOVAH, never given to any mere creature, is given to him: all the divine properties, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, eternity, equality with God, we find ascribed to him; divine efficiency in creation and providence is his; and he is the proper object of faith and worship, and therefore he must be the eternal God.

Deddfol. But he is called the Father's Servant, and is sent and upheld by him; and he says, *My Father is greater than I.*

Yefan. As mediator, in our nature, it is even so; but according to his divine nature, there can be no inequality.

Deddfol. Why, how many natures must he have?

Yefan. Two distinct natures, the divine and human.

Deddfol. Then he is two persons.

Yefan. No; he assumed not a human person, but a human nature, which never subsisted separately from the divine.

Deddfol. These things are all mysteries above my reason.

Yefan. And so they should be: *For without con-*

troversy great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.

Deddfol. But reason is the gift of God ; and while I have it I shall look upon what is unreasonable as incredible.

Yefan. Many things above our reason may yet be very reasonable ; and assure yourself, that nothing can be more unreasonable than to reject divine revelation. Though many mighty men of reason have esteemed the things of God foolishness, we are sure a divine testimony cannot deceive : *The Just shall live by faith.*

Gruffydd. With your leave, my honored teacher, it is indeed said, that *the just shall live by faith*, and God is true, therefore every just person in the world shall live so ; but from all that *Deddfol* hath said it seems evident to me, that he is a very great stranger to that life, therefore how just he is, it behoves him to consider. Does the man who asserts justification by works live by faith ? Does the man who denies the satisfaction of Christ live by faith ? Does the man who denies the divine nature of our Redeemer live by faith ? Of the nature of faith he has given a very odd account : he told us, that faith was a sincere assent unto the truth of all that is recorded concerning Christ. I think I may venture to say, that whoever defines faith after this manner does not himself give a sincere assent to what is recorded. And what if he did grant that every thing recorded in scripture must be true ? Don't the devils believe so and tremble ? Are they not very far from living by faith ? Who can live by faith, and not believe in Christ ? And who can believe in Christ, who does not believe him to be the eternal God ? It is granted, that all true faith comprehends a sincere assent to the truth of the gospel ; but in a special manner stands in the *consent* of the soul to the blessed design of it, embracing Christ as its chiefest good, and trusting in him as mighty to save ; which persons can never do, and hold the pernicious principles which *Deddfol* maintains. Therefore I humbly think it is

our immediate duty to reprove him of sin, because he believeth not in Christ.

Dewi. Indeed, brother, I think so too. *Deddfol,* you stand related to us in visible church-membership; but had you at first discovered such principles as you now profess, we should have thought it our duty to shut the door against you. But seeing, as I said, that you stand in visible relation to us, I hope we shall be helped to discharge that duty which we owe to our Lord, to you, and to ourselves. You did in the confession you made upon admission, own yourself lost and undone under sin; you did confess Christ as a complete Saviour; and you professed the effectual grace of the holy Spirit, leading to believe in Jesus Christ. You then renounced all dependence upon works, for you said you had none but what were sinful; you then did, in words at least, cast off all confidence in the flesh, and betake yourself to the mercy of God, and the righteousness of Christ only, who was then owned by you as the great God and your Saviour. And for a considerable time we know you were wont to express abundant satisfaction in the doctrine you heard, and seemingly admired grace, that you were fixed in fellowship with the saints. Where now is that blessedness you spoke of? Where is that faith in Christ which you professed? Where is that love to the church and to its peace? And where is that respect which you used to say was due to its elders? Not that we desire the respect and regard of men; we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; only we think that to slight us, endeavour to bring any of those under our care to have mean thoughts of us, or either of us to undervalue the other, must, we being in the way of our duty, appear inconsistent with your duty to our gracious Redeemer, and your solemn covenant with the church and its officers. What a base insinuation was that against my dear brother and fellow-labourer, who should have been esteemed your *honored* teacher, where you tell *Hygar,*

who through grace has escaped your snare, that in observing what you had written, he would be able to form a judgment of the teachers preaching in general. I am your grieved pastor, and do here, with my fellow-elders, rebuke and reprove you, that you may be sound in the faith. I charge you with pernicious errors, inconsistent with real christianity and call you to repentance, and to believe in Christ. If ever you had any real acquaintance with him, I am certain you have deeply revolted from him; and I earnestly desire you may not dishonor him, and distress his church no longer.

CHRISTOPHILUS. Well, I must say, that though their trial was great, there was a real glory upon them in their faithful dealing with a very erroneous person! Though they were distressed, they were helped to discharge their duty. It was certainly their duty to do all they could to recover him from the error of his way, and save his soul from death: and it was their duty, to the utmost of their power, to prevent the spreading of such pernicious errors; for his words, especially among persons weak, guardless, or addicted to novelties, might eat as a canker: And in the discharge of their duty, whatever fruit might follow, they were in the way to glorify Christ, and enjoy true peace and comfort themselves.

EPENETUS. You must look upon the account I gave only as the sum and substance of what passed; though they were very particular and close, and a very establishing day it was unto all the godly that were present; who were also thereby furnished with many scriptural arguments to strengthen their brethren in the Lord. When their reasonings with *Deddfol* were over, *Dewi*, with many tears, concluded the opportunity in prayer; earnestly desiring their endeavours might be greatly blessed unto the reprov'd person, and that they might all be blessed with great comfort and establishment in the truth, and that in principles and practice they might all the days of their life adorn the doctrine of their Redeemer.

NEOPHYTUS. The errors of this man I see were great and many; and I see, upon them all they did not reason with him at that time. He certainly denied the effectual operations of the Holy Spirit in conversion; and asserted, that God grants sufficient power to all to save themselves, and to improve what assistance he gives in order thereto; which assistance he seems to confine unto that of a persuasive or a dissuasive kind, afforded to all, and improved by those who are pleased to comply therewith. But choice of any unto glory, and to all grace in order thereto, can never consist with what he confessed, It is very strange, that persons who read the scriptures, and believe them to be of divine inspiration, and do but consider the account given there of God and man, of duty and sin, together with the way of salvation through the Redeemer, should ever embrace one of the pernicious principles maintained by *Deddfol*. Is it possible for a good man to be left to deny Christ and grace in such a manner?

THEOPH. Under clouds and temptations a good man, for the trial of his faith, may be much entangled and perplexed, but our Lord says, that his faith shall not *fail*; but if it was with this man's heart, as he confessed with the mouth, he had no faith *in* Christ. Nor is it possible for any one who does not believe his divine nature, to have any faith *in* him. Who does trust, who dare trust his soul with a mere creature!

SYLLOGISTICUS. God, that cannot lie, has promised to put his fear in the hearts of the godly; and has said they should not depart from *him*. Though they may doubt upon, or depart from some truths not fundamental; yet from Christ they shall not depart; they shall not deny his Godhead. If the foundation are destroyed, what can the righteous do?

PHILALETHES. The seed of God shall remain and abide; and we are confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun the good work will finish it until the day of Christ. The work of his hands he will not forsake; the godly are his workmanship, nor shall they be

left to forsake his mercy in his Son, and trust their own works,

NEOPHYTUS. But our dear THEOPHILUS just now said, that nobody dare trust his soul with a mere creature; there are not many that trust in Christ, pray what do the rest trust in?

PHILOLOGUS. Trust in! they would fain trust in themselves, and endeavour to make the best of every thing that belongs to themselves; but finding self shaking under them, they will use all the methods they can to establish it, search after all propping considerations, which, though put all together, may appear too feeble to be trusted in, yet they flatter themselves they may thereby be recommended unto as much mercy as they may want, so that in the whole they trust in nothing; as it may be plainly gathered from that prayer which *Morgan* the Briton taught the widow, as it was objected to him in the *Diospolitan* Synod, about the year of Christ 414, *Tu nosti, Domine quam sanctæ, quam innocentes, quam puræ ab omni fraude et rapina quas ad te expando Manus; quam justa, quam immaculata labia et ab omni mendacio libera, quibus tibi ut mihi miserearis preces fundo.* "Thou knowest, O Lord, how holy, how innocent, how pure from all deceit and violence the hands are, which I stretch forth to thee; how just, how unspotted, how free from lying are those lips, wherewith I pour forth prayers unto thee, that thou wouldst have mercy on me." She must not wholly trust her own *purity*, nor wholly trust *mercy*; but plead the former, as the condition of her obtaining the latter.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, what a prayer was that! I never heard such a prayer in all my life.

CHRISTOPHILUS. But I know the man that has heard some prayers very much like it.

THEOPH. Pray, EPENETUS, let us hear what steps they took, and how they dealt further with *Deddjol*, and how did the affair end?

EPENETUS. The very next week, they, upon a like

solemn day, dealt in a like manner with *Digyfraith*, and their endeavours with him were also attended with very little success; whereupon they thought it expedient to acquaint the church, and after earnest prayers to God, the church with the elders, resolved to send letters to sister churches, containing a brief account of their trials, and desiring them to send their messengers on such a day, that upon prayer, consolation, and advice, they might the better know what to do in concerns of this nature.

NEOPHYTUS. O dear EPHENETUS: of all this I want a particular account.

EPHENETUS. That you may have, if the Lord will, the next opportunity; you see our time is gone, duties at home call for us.

PHILALETHES. When we hear of persons forsaking the truth, and falling from the doctrine of grace, what reason have we, who through grace stand, to take heed lest we fall, and be led away with the error of the wicked; and what abundant cause have we to bless our God who establishes us in the truth! And how are we bound to cry continually to him, *Send forth thy light and thy truth, let them lead us, let them bring us unto thy holy hill.* Dear brethren, let us always, to God and the word of his grace, commit each other, and all the Israel of God.

THE END OF THE NINTH DIALOGUE.

DIALOGUE X.

Digyfraith is dealt with in the same manner. Denies the commanding power of the Law of God: is against confessing, and mourning for Sin: is sharply reproved. The Case of both laid before the Church. A Messengers' Meeting is agreed upon. The Letter sent to Llettyrdwr for Messengers on this Occasion. Some Account of that Meeting. The advice given to deal with them both as Heretics. What Heresy is. The Communion of Churches considered. A Letter of Dismission. The comfortable Death of Didwyll. The Conclusion.

NEOPHYTUS.

COME, beloved EPHENETUS, I hope we shall now be entertained with some account of that other troublesome man; I think you called him *Digyfraith*; pray what methods did the church at *Caerludd* take with him?

EPHENETUS. I think I did last opportunity just tell you, that on a solemn day, the very following week, they in a very particular manner dealt with him; some short account thereof I shall now give. The elders and several brethren being come, *Dewi* in an humble affectionate manner, committed all that did lie before them that day to God; mourned much before the Lord under a sense of their weakness and trials, that the enemy should in several ways so break in upon them; desired the Lord would give them all true repentance

where they had been remiss, and that the Spirit of the Lord would now lift up his standard and chase the adversary away; begged a blessing on what they had been concerned in with *Deddfol*, and blessed God who stirred them up and enabled them to bear their testimony to the truth; and desired they might be enabled now to witness for God and his law, to the honor of his name, the recovery of the mistaken brother, and the edification and establishment of the godly, in their most holy faith. Then spoke *Yefan* as follows:

Yefan. My dear brethren, It is an unspeakable mercy to us, that we have the written word to have a recourse to at all times; it is indeed a light that shines in a dark place, whereunto we do well to take heed: persons keep in the way, or recover themselves into it, when out, by taking heed thereto. We have met with some trials, which at the first we did not expect; we were so weak as not to think our life would prove a warfare, and wondered what might be the use designed for the prepared armour; but since then we have had reason to own the wisdom of our God in preparing it, and his grace in enabling us to put it on, and his great mercy in helping us to make use thereof, in a time of need. There is no part of it superfluous, nor is there a necessary piece unproved; for our backs we must never turn. Blessed be God for the helmet and the breast-plate, the sword and the shield, and all the rest; and blessed be God that hitherto we have been helped to stand in an evil day. The Captain of our salvation, dear brethren, is with us, and the shout of a King is amongst us; and he that did deliver and doth deliver, we trust will still deliver us. Awful was Satan's attempt by *Deddfol*, who, poor creature, lies yet in his snare, against the person, work, and grace of Christ; and no less awful, if duly considered, is the attempt he makes by *Digyfraith* here present. His letter unto an honest young christian he would have deceived, contains many dangerous errors, which I shall now distinctly and deliberately read, that you may, with greater ad-

vantage, make your just observations thereupon.—
reads it——. It is really very shocking to see so many weighty and important truths abused, and so many pernicious principles crowded together in so few lines. I shall not so much as ask him whether the letter is his, for it's very well known whose it is ; but, *Digyfraith*, I must ask you, does this letter contain your present judgment?

Digyfraith. Sir, I do own that it contains my present judgment; and I wonder that you, whom I have heard so often exalt the grace of God, should ever say that it contains pernicious errors, when my letter is nothing else but a consistent testimony for free grace: whereby, as you have often told us, we are saved.

Yefan. How consistent a testimony for free grace it is, may be considered before we have done; and seeing you put me in mind of my preaching free grace, it behoves me in a very particular manner to be concerned in that work; and therefore I charge you most solemnly, with a downright opposition to all the grace of Christ, though you seem in some words to make your boast thereof, when you say you love to hear of nothing but grace.

Digyfraith. Sir, I wonder this should be charged upon me as a crime, seeing we are saved by grace!

Yefan. But that grace of God which bringeth salvation, teaches persons to *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*; so this grace of God makes it necessary that ministers should explain what ungodliness is, and what worldly lusts are, that they may be avoided; and what duties belong to sobriety, righteousness, and godliness, that they may be practised: therefore they that love to hear of the grace of God, must love to hear of all these; and each of them thoroughly handled, may take up many discourses.

Digyfraith. As I said before, I love to hear of grace, all my happiness is of grace; and if of grace, it

is no more of works; Duties are works, and though I don't care to be noisy and troublesome, yet to tell you the truth, I don't love to hear of them; for when I have been comforted in hearing the doctrine of grace, I have often, before the discourse was finished, been slain in hearing duties mentioned. Oh! it is the sound of grace that refreshes me, and I must again say I love nothing else.

Yefan. What sort of refreshment your's is, I know not; nor do I desire that acquaintance with grace, which despises and excludes duties. I look upon every duty as a special mercy from God unto my soul: and the more I am acquainted with God, as the God of all grace, the more I am led to delight in every duty towards God. I delight in his law after the inner man, and find that in keeping his commandments there is a great reward. A glorious connection there is between grace and duties, in the consistent doctrine of the everlasting gospel; but you seem to separate what God has put together, and profess your delight only in the word *grace*.

CHRISTOPH. You bring to my mind a certain opportunity I once had, of hearing a certain person preach from that text, *for by grace are ye saved*; and the word *grace* I suppose might be above a hundred times in his sermon. He told us, that it was grace that put Father and Son upon entering into a covenant of redemption, in order to bring fallen man into a salvable state; and that it was wonderful grace in God, that he should, for the sake of unworthy sinners, relax the rigour of his law; and condescending grace altogether amazing, that God should freely offer to enter into a covenant of grace with man; and grace indeed, that the terms thereof should be so mild and moderate, and every way so very reasonable, to be fulfilled also by his gracious help; and that thereupon in the method of wise grace, our Redeemer's rectoral glory was vindicated; and notwithstanding those small disproportionate performances continued in, an eternal weight

of glory should be the reward. Behold, said he, the grace of all this ! An honest christian that seemed to be greatly affected with the discourse, walking from thence along with me, said, well, this is free grace indeed ! I was greatly pleased to hear this joyful sound. I told him that I hope he was a lover of the grace of God in truth, and that all my dependance was also upon grace ; then told him how and why I was greatly displeased with the discourse.

THEOPH. And once I heard a minister preach from those words, *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, words just by the text you mentioned ; he insisted much on the true nature of good works, from whence they sprung and whither they tended ; insisted pretty much upon the necessity and usefulness of them, and greatly pleased and refreshed I was to hear him : but there was an honest acquaintance of mine there, who seemed to hear with uneasiness, and told me, that he believed the man was a *free-willer*, and for justification by works. I told him I was very sorry he thought so ; and endeavoured, I hope not without some success, to convince him that it was a precious free-grace sermon, though the word free-grace was never once in it.

PHILAL. Poor christians under such weaknesses are greatly to be pitied, and to the utmost of our power their infirmities helped, and for them we should pray without ceasing ; that they may be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. But I am afraid the person of whom EPHENETUS speaks, was more wicked than weak, as appears by other things in his letter ; but we have interrupted the story of him.

EPHENETUS. In that you have done no harm, greater usefulness may attend what you said, than any account I can give of him ; however, upon Yefan's saying that he seemed to separate what God had put together and please himself only with the word *grace* ; he replied, And with submission be it spoken, you seem to put together what God has for ever separated, grace and works, the believer and sin.

Yefan. When you can shew me a person truly acquainted with the grace of God, averse to good works, or without a heart for them; or when you can shew me a believer who has no sin belonging to him, what you say shall be considered.

Digyfraith. Sir, I hope you see your humble servant. True acquaintance with grace I have, works are with me of no value; a believer I am, nor have I any sin belonging to me: God himself, who can no otherwise than see every thing, says that he sees none; and though sought for by him, he finds none.

Yefan. The scripture informs me, that without shewing your good works, you can never shew me that you have any true acquaintance with grace; and it is a very strange thing that God can see no sin in you, when I a poor worm that can see but little, can see sin both in you and in myself.

Digyfraith. You see through a false *medium*, which deceives your sight; and you may depend upon it that it is so, because the scripture says, *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel*; therefore to be sure there is none, else he would have seen it.

Yefan. Iniquity and perverseness, idolatry and villany reigned over the *Moabites*, but God was *Israel's* King, and his law was unto the tribes a rule of walk and worship. And though some among them might be very wicked, and none of them perfect, yet the abominations of the nations did not reign over them as a people. They were God's holy nation and peculiar people; and when compared with the idolatrous nations, the beauties of holiness shined upon them; nor was any iniquity nor perverseness tolerated by their laws, nor embraced by the church in the wilderness.

Digyfraith. But the sins of believers are not seen, nor to be seen; for they are, according to the scriptures, blotted out and covered.

Yefan. And according to the scriptures they are seen too; and to God, the man after God's own heart,

said, *Against thee have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* I grant there is a sense, wherein it may be said, that God does not see the sins of his people; it is sometimes mentioned in the sacred scriptures, but whenever the servants of Christ and the children of God, may be called to make use of such an expression, it should be evangelically explained and received, in the most agreeable manner to all the divine perfections. It is said, that if God should *mark* iniquity, no person could stand; but there is forgiveness with him. The iniquity that is forgiven is not marked or is not *seen*; that is, God will not enter into judgment with that person; so that with the eye of his *vindictive justice* he does not see such a person's iniquity or mark it, and in that sense it shall be remembered no more; but to the eye of his providence all things are open and naked, and it is impossible it should be otherwise. Our most secret thoughts are constantly under his view, and we are glad they are; and he can as well cease to be God, as properly to forget any one of our innumerable evils.

Digyfraith. Well, this is a language I like not, nor do I know who can like it and live; What! God see sin in me! It is cutting, 'tis killing, take it in any sense.

Yefan. You must either have dishonorable thoughts of God, unworthy of his divine perfections, or you must have a secret aversion unto the doctrine of the divine omniscience; and would fain hide yourself from the all-seeing eye of God. I fancy, for all your daring confidence, excuse the word, that you see some things in yourself, that you are not willing God should see: I can't think, but if all the truth was known and considered, a guilty heart lies close at the bottom of this principle of your's else you would with humility and gladness sure embrace the truth; the whole truth, under the distinction I offered, between God's seeing sin in *vindictive justice*, and his seeing sin, all sin, even in its most distant causes and springs, as he is and

must be the omniscient God. He knows all things, and therefore he must know your sins.

Digyfraith. But he knows all things, and therefore he must know that I have no sins; there are no sins that can be called mine. Whatever might be called by that name, was laid on Christ, became his, and ceased to be mine. There are no sins, that are my sins, and therefore God himself, who is omniscient, cannot see them as *my* sins.

Yefan. It is very well known, that I look upon the doctrine of imputation of sin to Christ, and the imputation of his righteousness to his people, as the glory of my life and work; but though it is said that the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, yet 'twas we went astray, and 'twas our iniquity. The judgment of God is always according to truth; and therefore he must know that Christ never sinned, though our sins were imputed to him, and his being willing they should be so imputed was in him eminent obedience; and God must know that the sins are daily committed by us, we are the very transgressors, though God does not impute our trespasses unto us. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, without imputing their trespasses unto them; but though he did not impute them, they are nevertheless called their trespasses. Though Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree, they were *our* sins, and so we are daily to confess them as *our* sins, and mourn over them before the Lord.

Upon this *Diwyd* said, My honored teacher, give me leave to observe, that in our private meetings, *Digyfraith* was frequently called to pray; and though I give all possible attention, I never heard him confess sin nor mourn over it before the Lord. He had indeed in his prayers many good expressions, but for the most part a long round-about ramble, more like preaching than praying; speaking to the people rather than speaking to God; wherein he would shew sometimes great indignation against thoughts different from his own,

and complain of other people's darkness and legality ; but I never heard him confess his own corruption, bewail his own imperfection, nor beg evangelical repentance, in all my acquaintance with him. And I desire to know who the man is that can tell me he ever saw him shed tears in mourning over sin before God ; I can produce the man who saw him sneer at a tender confession of sin, and heard him deride a weeping christian as a weak insignificant soul, blessed with a moist brain.

Digyfraith. I don't know with what view I am thus accused, nor do I much care. I remember when I was so weak as to think I must confess and mourn, and did accordingly do so; but it was rough unnatural work, but then I knew no better: and I find a sort of a pity to poor creatures that know no better yet; and indeed seem to take pleasure in crying, complaining, and confessing, as if there was a great deal of christianity in it. But for my part, it was never pleasant work to me; and when I thought I saw an open door of deliverance, I quickly forsook the bondage I was in; being called to liberty I accepted it, and stand fast in it. I told you before that I have no sin, God says he sees none, and what in the world have I to confess and mourn over? It is something odd, that a christian of my growth should be called to account by those of a low stature, who cannot see as I do. I bear with you as well as I can, though your confessions and contritions are a burden to me; but you, like feeble fretful children, cannot bear with me, who would fain bring you on towards manhood in religion.

Yefan. I think if you were to measure yourself by the sacred word, you would not have those high thoughts of yourself. The rule given us there is, that we should esteem others better than ourselves; and the apostle Paul, who was I suppose a taller christian than you, says that he was less than the least of all the saints. We feeble children, can't help thinking, that if you had such great acquaintance with the law of faith

as you boast of, your boasting would be excluded. Indeed towards others you have of a long time carried it with an air of disdain, which made them think you were not so tall as you yourself imagined. That I be not tedious in mentioning the many instance of mournful acknowledgments of sin by the saints, under both Testaments, let the standing rule given us by the beloved disciple suffice; *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* How differently minded from you was the apostle? You say you have no sin; he says, *that if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* You say that confession of sin is needless; he says it is necessary. You say you have not sinned; he says, *that you thereby make God a liar, and his word is not in you.* Another apostle says, *that in many things we offend all;* and for all your haste you are one of the offenders, and as eminent as you fancy yourself, it would not be beneath you to acknowledge it.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, but was not this a little too tart; might not a more respectful way of speaking, with greater probability, have prevailed upon him to have mean thoughts of himself?

THEOPH. No truly, my dear friend, you are not much acquainted with persons of those principles. Speak respectfully to them and of their attainments, and they'll quickly boast that it is upon a full conviction of their excellency that you do so. I have had occasion more than once to know the truth of this. They all should be reproved sharply, as persons vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind.

CHRISTOPH. My dear NEOPHYTUS, it will be your mercy to be unacquainted with such persons to the end of your days. They speak big swelling words; the apostles Peter and Jude give a very distinct account of them: They talk much of grace, but you must take their words for it; for if Barnabas was to visit them, ~~see~~ the grace of God he could not. I gave you a short

account of some of them a few weeks ago, which I remember gave you some pain. Many of them deceive with fair speeches, but may you and all who love a tender conscience, be helped to stand upon the strictest guard: cry continually to the God of all grace, for deliverance from vermine so destructive, and cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart. But, dear Epenetus, excuse us.

Epenetus. He having been numbered, as I told you among the offenders, cries out, in the name of astonishment and wonder, Who and what do I offend? I do assure you that I offend not my own conscience: if you say I give you offence; I pray, why should you be offended at that which works together for your good? If you say I offend God, you will find yourselves greatly mistaken; for if he says that I am all fair and have no spot, I hope I give him no offence. Besides, what you call offences have no malignity in them. They work together for our good, and therefore must themselves be good.

Yefan. In the first place I tremble to hear you say that you offend not your own conscience! if your conscience was not a stifled or a seared one, it would fly in your face upon every expression you deliver'd. You have indeed offended us, and you have given us trouble, and we know that this trouble shall be turned to our good; are therefore your vile opinions and practices harmless? The vendition of Joseph was a vile and barbarous action, God meant it for good; but did that gracious design of God, make that base act of his brethren sinless? As for God's saying unto his church, *Thou art all fair without a spot*, it's to be hoped when the time intended comes, you will understand it better; at present I do assure you it intends you not. But how base is your insinuation, that what we call sin, has no malignity in its nature!

Digyfraith. Why, sir, is not the sting of death gone? Is not the curse of the law gone? And pray are we any more under the law? And was not the law the

strength of sin? And if the strength of sin is gone; is not the malignity thereof removed? And can you think that he who did all the former, left the latter undone? And besides, how can there be any malignity in that which is for our sakes? for all things are for our sakes, and therefore this. And how can any malignity remain in what worketh for our good? for all things work together for our good, and therefore this which you call sin. But for my part, I am willing to believe, that he who gave us the victory over the law, made an end of sin; at least so far as it can do no hurt.

Didwyll. Oh my dear brethren, what language is this! Is it possible for a christian to hear it, without trembling and astonishment! This is the man of light, the christian of growth, the man of high stature! And is it for this he values himself so highly! May all who fear God, avoid him and his impious principles: What! no malignity in sin! It is against the holy nature of God, and nothing else can be so; and yet no harm in it! O monstrous! The Holy Spirit of God, by the apostle called sinful lusts, *hurtful*; but according to this man, they are harmless: By what spirit must he speak? The Lord says, *Do not that abominable thing which my soul hateth*; but this man says, that it is a good thing, and worketh for good. But yet to me he seems to be condemned of himself, as *heretics* are; for though he says that sin works for good, he in the same breath says, there is an end of sin, whereby I think he means that there is no sin; and indeed if what he says is true, that he is under no law, there can be neither sin nor obedience. It is indeed said, that all things do work together for good to them that love the Lord, but I am sure he has abused the text, and I desire a true account may be given of it; and let all present hear what the things are that work together for good?

Yefan. It is most evident, that sin is not intended; it never wrought for good, it has no good in its nature, and therefore it is impossible it should work for good.

Sin tends to nothing but sin; it is only evil, nor is it possible any power should make sin work for good. God can indeed remove sin, over-rule sin, and bring about by his wisdom, goodness and power, what is really good to the sinner, but out of sin he never brings any good. It is even as impossible for him to do it, as it is impossible for him to lie. The fall of Adam was by almighty grace over-ruled for good, but out of that fall our salvation did not spring. Every sin cleaving to our natures and actions tends to nothing but more sin and misery; though God over-rules our corruptions, subdues them, and by his Spirit works repentance in us, humiliation and holiness; but nothing of this springs out of sin: it is impossible from the very nature of the thing, that sin should work for any good at all. But, by all things working for our good, the apostle intends all the dispensations of providence, and all the afflictions which in providence may attend us, as is evident by all the context; which also is meant in that other portion of scripture, where he says, that all things are for our sakes. But as for sin, nothing can be said of it, but that it is exceeding sinful.

Digyfraith. When I say sin works for good, I use the word *sin* in conformity to the language of the times, and I understand thereby those actions you term sinful. But if things, in such a light as I enjoy, were strictly considered, among us believers there can be no sin; for we are not under the law: now it is evident, that where there is no law there can be no transgression. Christ redeemed us from under the law, and we are dead to it; we have nothing to do with it, nor has that any thing to say to us.

Yefan. It is certain that we are, through grace, delivered from the law as a covenant of works, and Christ has removed the curse of it from his people; but by this grace of his the law is made void, but established as a rule of life. Therefore the apostle says, that he was not without law to God, but under the law to Christ: and the same apostle says, that circumcision

is nothing, but that real religion lies keeping the commandments of God. It is, I must own, very awful, to hear you say that you are under no commandments, nor can you therefore transgress. The Spirit of God gave this command to a gospel-minister, *Those who sin, rebuke before all*; and I do in his name here rebuke you as a notorious sinner, a wilful and a deliberate one. Nothing but secret love to sin, and lusts, could lead you to skreen yourself thus for a tormenting conscience. A wretched state truly, wherein you are forced to oppose God's revealed will, cast off his holy law, in order to procure and possess a poor, pitiful, paltry peace. Love unto iniquity, and affection of singularity, haughtiness of mind, with a desire to be eminent at any rate, are the cords wherewith you are bound: and though you promise yourself liberty, I do assure you that you are very much like a servant of corruption. You would be under no yoke, and affect a course of life without a rule; turning from the holy commandment delivered to you, you discover nothing but the disagreeable and dirty rant of carnal mind, that is enmity against God, and is not subject to his law.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, how could you stand under rebukes and reproofs so sharp and close!

CHRISTOPH. Alas! my dear NEOPHYTUS, such people are proof against all. Darts are counted to them as stubble, and they laugh at the shaking of a spear. When once they work themselves to this, that the law of God says nothing to them; what rebukes, what reproofs can reach them! They look upon all of that kind as proceeding from weakness or want of light: and in producing texts against them, you do but trifle; for if they dare not deny them, they will with a disdainful look pity your weakness, and tell you, that you don't understand them.

THEOPH. A certain teacher told me to my very face, that God requires nothing of his people but what he enables them to perform; and pray, NEOPHYTUS, where then is place for rebuke or reproof? And the very

same person publicly said, that we are not under the commanding power of the law; which must intend, that the law says nothing to us, nor have we any commands, so there can be neither sin nor obedience. And when I have urged the law of God as a standing abiding rule of life, I have been answered, that if it is a rule, it is a *passive* one: That it is a rule that says nothing to us. Which assertion must include all the vile notions of that base and troublesome man EPENETUS mentions.

SYLLOGIST. Yes, grant it to be a truth that God requires nothing of us but what he enables us to perform; or, grant that we are not so much as under the commanding power of the law, and I will dare promise to defend and maintain all the vile notions of that man, which have been told us, and others of kin to them as bad as they. But pray, beloved EPENETUS, proceed.

EPENETUS. Upon the close reproof which was given, *Digyfraith* says, Sir, though I am delivered from the commanding power of any divine law whatever, yet by a law which you are under, as you say, you must be esteemed a transgressor. Why judgest thou thy brother? or why settest thou at nought thy brother? I think you judge me and condemn me.

Gruffudd. That's your great mistake at least: Our honored teacher, to whom I think you should have shewn more respect, did neither condemn nor judge you. He knows you must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: God is Judge himself. But you were told, that you appear very much like a servant of corruption; and that you discover nothing but the disagreeable rant of a carnal mind: and all this is very true. With your state he meddled not, but with your corrupt pernicious principles; and base and corrupt they are. For if *Deddfol*, who gives us also a great deal of trouble, denies our God and Saviour, I can truly say, that you deny the Lord that bought you. You will not allow him to be your Lord; for laws you will allow him none; you are under no commands,

and you can neither obey nor disobey; you can neither be virtuous nor vicious: even faith itself, which the law of God requires, is no duty of yours. And if principles of a more dreadful consequence can be gathered out of the dunghills of darkness, I am greatly mistaken.

Addfwyn. I think it is our duty and glory to shew tenderness and meekness towards all men; but there appears so much ungodliness in the principles which *Digyfraith* does profess and maintain, that I humbly think it impossible for a church of Christ, zealously concerned for his glory, to bear with them. Is it possible for a christian to despise and deride those duties the word of Christ calls for, and directs how in a becoming manner to perform? Can it be a burden to him to hear them asserted and explained, and urged from gospel motives? Can he be a christian, who in this imperfect state sees no sin in himself? who is against acknowledging his transgressions and mourning for his sin? who assert that there is no malignity in sin? that he is not under the law of God as a rule of life? that the law of God says nothing to him; and that therefore he can be no transgressor of it? Can this, and much more to the same purpose, be the language of a believer in the holy Redeemer? For my part, I must own, it is with the utmost abhorrence I hear and consider the things he esteems his glory, and I humbly think it our immediate duty to call him to unfeigned repentance, though his principles will not allow him to think it his duty, and though he has not of a long time given it a place in his prayers.

Dewi. Trials of this nature we did not indeed expect, and therefore are they more ponderous upon our spirits, now they are come. Though it is so written, yet we did not expect that from among our own selves, should men arise speaking *perverse* things. *Digyfraith*, I here charge you with hatred against God: You don't love his divine perfections; you are not willing to think that he sees your sins. If you had only in hu-

mility of soul acknowledged that though your sins are many, and that in your own sight they abound, and that on the account of them you lothe yourself in your own sight, yet that God in his *vindictive* justice does not see them, nor mark your iniquity against you, we should have looked upon it as an evangelical confession: But you, by what you say, must either deny that you have any sin in your nature, or you must deny the omniscience of God. For believers thankfully in holiness and humility to say, that their sins are covered, cast behind God's back, and shall be remembered no more, in an explained sense, agreeable to the divine perfections and all the revealed will of God, is what we shall never militate against; but for you to say, that you cannot abide to hear it said, that God sees your sin in any sense, is most abominable. Ah, poor creature! he knows your foolishness, and your sin is not hid from him. I here charge you also with impenitency and hardness of heart: You are puffed up, as the apostle says, and have not rather *mourned*. But, alas! you are against all mourning for sin. You are not for looking to him whom you have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness for him. Do what you will, or omit what you please, you are never distressed. The confessing mourning christian, you call a whining one, and his tears you trample upon. Him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, who trembleth at God's word, you set no value upon. However, I call you to mourn and repent, for I apprehend your case to be very dangerous. I here in a like manner charge you with love to iniquity and sin: for you say that sin has no malignity in it, but works for our good: and in calling it sin, you say, you only conform yourself unto our language. You are an advocate for the evil of evils, out of which no good can come. And lastly, I here charge you with being too much like a child of Belial, without a yoke, without a law. You are not under the law of God. This I look upon as the mother of all your other abominations: for, grant that the law of

God commands you nothing, and it must be granted that you have no sin to confess, repent for, nor mourn over. I am as yet your pastor, and in the Lord's name, whom I serve, and under whose law I own myself to be, do call you to sincere repentance.

Upon this *Yefan* prayed with great humility and affection, confessing, and with many tears mourning over their sins, which made way and opened a door for such a trial as this; owned they had not taken that heed to themselves and to their ministry, which they ought to have taken: and that he was afraid that while they were asleep the enemy sowed such tares. Earnestly desired their dear Lord to forgive all, and make them more watchful for the future, every one in his place. With great enlargedness he desired the blessing of heaven on the work they had been concerned in, for the establishment of every one that stood in the truth, and for the recovery of him whom they had endeavoured to convince of his abominable errors; and that God would in great mercy direct them farther what measures to take, as most for his glory, and their comfort. So that meeting concluded.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, I am persuaded this man was an *Antinomian*; I thought the first churches knew nothing of such principles, nor did I imagine they were disturbed by any person's professing such notions: for I use to read that they sprung up in *Germany* in Luther's time; one *John Angricola* being their chief.

PHILAL. What, did you never read the Epistle of James! Pray don't you find him contending with such people? They boasted they were believers, and works they did not value, and James calls them *vain* men, and tells them, that their faith whereof they boasted, was a dead faith. Have you never read the second Epistle of Peter? Does he not tell the christians that there were among them persons who were spots and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings even while they feasted with them? And though they spoke great swelling words of vanity, and promised liberty,

yet they did not cease from sin, but were the servants of corruption? And pray have you not read the Epistle of Jude? Does he not speak of the same spots feeding themselves without fear, clouds without water, carried about of winds, trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and yet their mouth speaking great swelling words? I do assure you, they were the *Antinomians* of that day.

NEOPHYTUS. My dear PHILALETHES, I return you thanks: And I heartily desire I may for ever be delivered from such persons and such principles!

THEOPH. And I say *Amen*, my dear NEOPHYTUS. And if at any time you think it expedient for your safety to prove any person upon this, bring him to the law of God, the eternal moral law of God contained in the ten commandments, and ask him, does he look upon that law of God as the rule of his life? If he denies it, avoid him. If he answers with reserves and evasions, avoid him. If he only says, 'Tis a rule, and, for the matter of it a good rule; avoid him. If he says, that it is a good rule to him, but a *passive* one that says nothing to him; still avoid him. If he says he is not under the commanding power of it, turn away from him. But if he says, that he sincerely takes it as God's revealed will to him, owns the authority thereof over his conscience and conversation, *thus saith the Lord*, breathing after universal obedience thereto, repenting and mourning where he falls short thereof, and fleeing by faith to Christ for all peace and pardon; I humbly hope you may take him for a friend and a companion. *To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

CHRISTOPH. It is certainly very awful to hear a man give the law a good word with a design to destroy it; but some of us have known that to be true. He that says, that we are not under the commanding power of the law of God, let him skreen himself under twenty flattering distinctions, is a destroyer of God's

law; for that law that does not command me, is no law to me; nor can my walking contrary thereunto be by the wisest and most impartial judges, esteemed a transgression thereof. When I see persons weary of the good old plain distinction between the law as a covenant, and the law as a rule, and that Christ has delivered us from under the law as a *covenant*, but has established it as a *rule*; I say, when I see persons quibbling upon this, and loth to receive it, I always suspect them.

SYLLOGIST. Most certainly, that law which commands me nothing I cannot transgress; and therefore no wonder those people who fancy they are not under God's law, should have nothing to confess. I have heard some of them confess and complain, and even rave and rant, but then it was never against themselves, but against some other people who did not please them. But I have really trembled at such performances as bold indications of *Atheism*, and the rather because impudently fathered upon the Spirit of God.

NEOPHYTUS. My dear friends, I return you all many thanks; but, dear EPHENETUS, how did they further deal with those men at *Caerludd*?

EPHENETUS. As I told you before, you must look upon the account I gave as very short and imperfect. Reason with much enlargement and zeal they did, and by ready writers all was took, that at a proper season all might be produced. The very next church-meeting, after strong cries and supplications to the Lord, for wisdom and faithfulness, the sum and substance of all was laid before the church. They mourned much under the weight of this trial, and upon deliberate consultation, they came to this resolution, to write letters to all the churches within their acquaintance, with a brief account of their present affliction, earnestly desiring they would send their messengers to be present with them on such a day, to consult with them before the Lord upon affairs of so great importance, and give their advice.

NEOPHYTUS. But would it not have been as well for the elders only to have sent other ministers, and beg their kind assistance on such a time, without sending from the church to the churches? Persons of ability we know would have been capable of giving good advice without being messengers.

THEOPH. How many things, **NEOPHYTUS**, think you in seventeen hundred years have crept in at that door. This may be as well as that, this is more prudent, this is more decent, &c. All the antichristian trumpery and tyranny entered thus. It is certain, that the messengers of the churches are the glory of Christ, the Spirit of God asserts it, and pray why should Christ lose any part of his glory? You say, would it not have been as well? And I ask you, if Christ loses any part of his glory, what can be an equivalent for it? Will you say, that the honor of the ministry may be better supported by the method you mentioned? I hope I shall always say, that with that ministerial honor which robs Christ of any part of his glory, I desire no acquaintance.

PHILAL. In the days of the apostles, certain men came to Antioch, and there delivered a dangerous doctrine, which produced no small dissension and disputation. Whereupon the church there determined, that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about the question, and on their way by the church were they brought. And when those messengers were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders; who came together to consider of this matter: and when they had considered it; then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with a letter also, which when the multitude was gathered together was delivered. Acts xv. The church at Antioch sent messengers unto the church at Jerusalem; and by the church at Jerusalem they were received. The whole church at Jerusalem

sent messengers again back to them: and to the brethren they sent an epistle, which when the multitude of them came together, was delivered. Behold a standing pattern for this part of the communion of churches; and that it might be so, the question was not decided by *extraordinary* apostolical power only.

CHRISTOPH. How often have I seen and heard this place produced for the support of arbitrary Synods, where the churches had neither messengers nor business! It concerns me to see the glory of Christ so lost among the churches!

NEOPHYTUS. But I still think that a wise man is as capable of giving advice when he is not a messenger as when he is: for his being sent can't add unto his abilities,

SYLLOGIST. You don't know that: Christ has ways reason can't reach to own his appointments and make them effectual. Have you never read that when people's worship is taught by the precepts of men, that God would proceed to do a marvelous work amongst them; the wisdom of their wise men should perish, and the understanding of the prudent should be hid? You think because they are the same men, let them follow the primitive pattern and order or not, they are equally capable of giving good advice; but you may find yourself mistaken, for being out of God's way their wisdom may perish. When they have rejected the word of the Lord, pray what wisdom is in them? But when a person is where Christ calls him, and the church sends him, he may humbly expect assistance and success.

NEOPHYTUS. But may there not be ministers' meetings which some people call Synods, and may they not meet without being sent as messengers from the churches?

THEOPH. Yes doubtless, and to a very good purpose if well improved. Christian acquaintance, love, and usefulness may thereby be promoted; only such meetings must be looked upon as discretionary and

not of divine appointment, nor must they assume power to impose any thing upon the churches.

NEOPHYTUS But when they are met together may not the churches ask their advice in any difficult cases?

THEOPH. Doubtless they may; but how must they do it? Those cases must be stated in the churches, messengers named and formally appointed in and by the church or churches, or it is impossible for them as churches to ask the advice. And then in what capacity must the ministers be considered? For you suppose that messengers of the churches they are not; it remains they must be looked upon in that work only as persons of good abilities. And if the church does not state the case, nor formally send its messengers, then it must be looked upon only as a private friendly consultation, which also may not be without its good consequences; but in difficult cases the primitive way must have the preference.

SYLLOGIST. Without all doubt; for after prayer in a church of Christ, where he has promised his presence and assistance, the case is stated; and in his presence the messengers are appointed, and with prayer to God for his special direction in their design, and his blessing upon their message, are they sent, and so are they the glory of Christ: when they deliver their message, it is not in a private way, but to and in a church of Christ, where they may be very sure of the abiding presence of Christ, according to his promise, and where other churches also may be present by their messengers. There, after prayer, where the presence of Christ in his church and churches may and should be in faith pleaded, which perhaps in an arbitrary Synod cannot be done, the case is considered, and their best advice given, with prayer in the church for a blessing thereon; this answers the primitive simplicity and purity, and as Christ's gracious institution must have the preference.

NEOPHYTUS. But is their advice so given of a binding nature, so that the church that receives it must submit to it, or sin against God?

THEOPH. The church to which the advice is given should be thankful to their Redeemer for the love and communion of his churches, and earnestly beg that he would now direct their hearts in all that concerns the given advice, that they may sincerely submit unto all of his will that appears therein, and in all obedience own his authority, and thankfully acknowledge the kind assistance of their sister churches. But if any thing therein appears to them contrary to the revealed will of their Lord Jesus, they are not bound to submit thereto, but peaceably dissent therein from the thoughts of their brethren, and do in it as well as they can.

NEOPHYTUS. Then to what purpose is it to advice them at all, unless the advice be attended with a binding authority?

THEOPH. Why truly, my young friend, in multitude of counsel there is safety; and many of God's servants in God's way, may discover some part of the divine pleasure out of the scriptures, which a few, and perhaps also under disadvantages, could not see; but the binding authority stands only in *thus saith the Lord*. All must be tried and examined by the scriptures. But by what you have said, you may easily see how readily authority over brethren grows in the soil of corrupt nature! It is a vile weed that fills the world, and it is a great deal of pity it should be suffered to grow in gardens.

NEOPHYTUS. My excellent **THEOPHILUS**, I hope you don't think that I aspire after any such power; you will excuse my putting the question for some information. But, however, authority there is in churches, or else they could not deal with offending members.

THEOPH. Only the authority of Christ, and that for edification, and not for destruction.

NEOPHYTUS. All Synods and councils pretend thereto.

THEOPH. But a congregational church of Christ can shew its commission, and produce the rules it has to act by.

NEOPHYTUS. Dear EPHENETUS, excuse me, and with the consent of my seniors, I beg I may be favored with the contents of one of the letters sent as you mentioned for messengers.

EPHENETUS. You may remember I gave you some account not long since of the grace of God in reaching several of the inhabitants of *Llettyrdwr*, now called *Bedford*; and now I must just tell you that the work of the Redeemer's kingdom quickly prospered there into a flourishing church; to which church, among others, a letter was sent as follows:

The Church of Christ meeting for public worship near Dwrborh in Caerludd, unto the Church of Christ sojourning at Llettyrdwr, wisheth all grace and peace.

Dearly Beloved in the Lord,

HOW can you, how can we sufficiently admire the wisdom of amazing grace, in the methods our Redeemer took to gather us to himself! And how can we sufficiently praise the God of all grace, who keeps his fear in such a manner in our hearts, that we shall not depart from him! We bless the Lord who brought us out of darkness into light; and we frequently with tender affections bless the Lord who hath translated you into the kingdom of his dear Son; and with holy admiration look back on the means he made use of to bring about so glorious a work! Our earnest desire is, dearly beloved, that you may be very strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that your love to the truth as it is in Jesus and to each other may abound, that your walk with and before the Lord may be very humble and holy, that your communion and fellowship may be very spiritual and refreshing, that all your testimony for Christ may be bright, consistent, and successful, and that in every sense you may increase with the increase of God. Act and walk, love and labour as

persons partakers of the greatest honor and happiness; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. We do hereby acquaint you that uncommon trials are at present upon us. There are two persons, who are members of us, that do give us a great deal of trouble: one denies the Godhead and grace of Christ; the other denies the law of God, the Redeemer's dominion, and our duty. We have through grace faithfully endeavoured their recovery out of Satan's snares; but to our great grief, there they are still held. We have great reason of thankfulness that the infection spreads not; and think it still our duty to use all means possible to continue that mercy, and deliver those who are deceived from the error of their way. After supplications before the Lord, and consultations among ourselves, we have resolved to call other churches to assist us by their messengers, that in the presence of our Redeemer we may consult together, and act for his glory according to the best advice. For this most solemn work we have fixed upon the tenth day of the third month, and the following day, if need be; and do hereby desire you, dearly beloved, to send your messengers to meet the messengers of other churches with us on the appointed day for our assistance; and we hope the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ shall attend us, for the special advantage and establishment both of you and

Your Affectionate Afflicted Brethren.

*At our Church-Meeting the
7th day of the first month.*

Letters unto the same purpose were sent to other churches, and poor *Cyndyn*, of whom you have heard, desired he might be the messenger to carry this.

CHRISTOPH. Ah, poor heart! he wanted to see his dear friends to whom he was made so useful in the day of his distress! And how welcome must he be to them! and how affected must they be together in discoursing over times, places, and things!

NEOPHYTUS. Pray dear CHRISTOPHILUS, suffer EPHENETUS to proceed to the account of that meeting, the method and work of it.

EPHENETUS. The time quickly came, and all the country messengers were there a day or two beforehand, and among them honest *Ffyddlon* now very far in years, appearing ripe for heaven. He had not for several years been at *Caerludd*, but he was received with many tears of joy, respect and affection. He spoke comfortably to them all, and told them that this trial would turn to the advantage of the Redeemer's kingdom in city and country.

CHRISTOPH. O this was affecting to see *Ffyddlon* once again! who was their father in Christ! I wish I could particularly hear what conversation he had with them, and they with him! How pleasant must it be to them to relate and hear over again the story of the precious work at *Hyfrydle*; and the wonders of grace at first in *Caerludd*.

NEOPHYTUS. Pray dear CHRISTOPHILUS, suffer EPHENETUS to proceed with the story of the messengers meeting.

CHRISTOPH. Well, well, so I will; but, for all your haste, there are no stories to be compared unto free and faithful relations of the work of grace, and the variety of wonders which in wise Providence attend it.

NEOPHYTUS. To every thing there is a season.

EPHENETUS. The day and the proper time of day being come, *Dewi* the pastor of the church began in prayer, and with great tenderness, judgment, and affection sent up strong cries to God for a special blessing on the design of the day, that the beauty of the Lord their God might be upon them, that their consultation might be carried on in the greatest decency and order, that all might be to the advantage of truth, the comfort and establishment of all the godly, and the recovery of those who had in any degree turned aside from the truth as it is in Jesus.

Prayer being ended, all the messengers of the seve-

ral churches in the most convenient order, took their seats, and unanimously chose the beloved *Efyddlon* Moderator *pro tempore*; a proper person chose to read over the minutes of things past, and two proper scribes to take down faithfully the speeches, debates, and resolutions of this christian Synod.

Upon this *Yefan* read that text in Acts xv. *And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.* And after taking notice of the true nature of christian consultation, and of the wisdom and goodness of our Redeemer in appointing and commanding the use of it in cases of difficulty and common concern; he gave unto them a brief account of the questions and cases they were to consider; and then wished them the special assistance of the spirit of Christ, and that they might be helped with clearness and comfort to keep close, to the written word. And each question and case they were to consider was took down by the scribes, and delivered to the Moderator.

Then *Deddfol* being present, and conveniently seated his letter was read, and also the minutes of their conference with him; and he was asked whether the letter was his, and whether the account was just. He answered, that the letter was his, and that he had nothing to object against the account.

Upon this each article was distinctly considered: every messenger giving his thoughts with as much clearness and good order as he could, together with the reason, or scripture, or both, which prevailed with him so to believe and speak; nor did any one interrupt another, nor speak twice to the same thing without first leave obtained. And *Deddfol* also, upon asking the Moderator, never was denied leave to reply to any thing that was spoken by any of the messengers; or by any of the elders of that church, until the Moderator, who always spoke last, had given his thoughts. Then immediately a new article was called, which was in a like manner considered: and in that order they went through the whole that concerned *Deddfol*, and

which took up the whole of that day. *Yefan* concluded the opportunity in prayer, and all for that day was dismissed, with notice to meet there again the next day at such an hour.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, I should be glad to hear what every one spoke, and what advice they gave the church in that man's affair.

EPENETUS. The first I don't think consistent with the design of my story, and a great deal of time it would take; but as to the advice, they all agreed that *Deddfol* was a stubborn and a perverse *Heretic*, and believed it to be the duty of the church to admonish him, and upon non-repentance to cut him off. And to this the Moderator set his hand.

NEOPHYTUS. And how did they deal with the other man?

EPENETUS. In the very same manner, and in his affair gave the church also the very same advice; and then dear *Ffyddlon* the Moderator preached from 1 Cor. xi. 19. *For their must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.* Upon this by the whole church in the presence of the messengers *Deddfol* and *Digyfraith* were both admonished; and the meeting, after public thanks being given to the messengers, concluded with praise and prayer.

NEOPHYTUS. And pray, how did this affair end?

EPENETUS. I told you there were ready writers appointed to take down the whole faithfully; the sum and substance whereof was transcribed into several copies, that the messengers might carry home with them, and read to their respective churches: and lodge the account with the elders, for a time of need. As for the two erroneous persons after a second admonition, they were rejected as *Heretics*.

NEOPHYTUS. But seeing they were moral in their walk, what need was their of excommunication?

PHILAL. The church could never observe the laws of Christ without it; for the command is very plain

and express, that such should be rejected after a first and second admonition. *If any man consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railing, evil surmissing, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,—from such withdraw thyself.*

SYLLOGIST. A church of Christ is a religious community, and is bound by revelation and reason to be found in the use of all means to preserve itself pure; and how is it possible for them to do so without taking heed lest there should a root of bitterness spring up and defile many? You speak of Heretics, moral in their walk! Do you consider what you say? There is not a Heretic upon earth that is a moral man. Could you judge that man moral, that denies the proper divinity of Christ, and says that God has relaxed the moral law? Or, could you judge that man moral, who says that he is not under the commanding power of the moral law? their doctrine is the doctrine of devils: and to suffer them to dwell in a church of Christ is to give place to the devil.

NEOPHYTUS. Indeed I own my knowledge very small; and after all that I have read about heresy, I very much question whether I know what a Heretic is.

THEOPH. Then truly, my NEOPHYTUS, you have read to very little purpose. But if you had read only the first verse of the second chapter in the second epistle of Peter, and considered it, you might have known what a Heretic was. You will see there, that he is an Heretic who denies the Lord that bought him. He that denies the *divine* nature of Christ; he that denies the *human* nature of Christ; he that denies the *unity* of both natures in one person; he that denies the *grace* of Christ, or he that denies the *laws* of Christ, is a Heretic.

PHILOLOGUS. According to the meaning of the

word, a *Heretic* takes delight and pleasure in a religion of his own *chusing*. Christ, as revealed in the scriptures, he despises and rejects; he denies the Lord in one or more of the things mentioned by our most excellent THEOPHILUS.

NEOPHYTUS. But I am at a loss how to understand what the apostle offers as a reason why a Heretic should be rejected; for he says, that such a man is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself. Pray, what is there in this peculiar to a Heretic?

THEOPH. Nothing at all; nor is it mentioned under any such view; but to shew, that though a Heretic may in other respects behave among men in a harmless manner, or perhaps may seem to abound in good works and usefulness, yet he is as vile a transgressor as any other, and therefore to be rejected. He is as much subverted as if he turned highwayman, and sinneth as much as if he was a murderer or an adulterer; judges himself unworthy of eternal life, and draws condemnation upon himself as much as any profligate transgressor whatever; and therefore to be cast out of the communion of the faithful, notwithstanding all his pretences to sanctify.

NEOPHYTUS. I thank you, my dear THEOPHILUS, many a weary step have I took, and far and wide have I rambled to seek for satisfaction in this, and all the while it was at home near unto me, but I did not see it. But others, I judged wise and great in their *criticisms* upon the several words, led me a wild-goose chase, till I had lost sight of the scope and design of the apostle: but I hope I have it, and shall hold it. I have one favor more to ask: We have heard of a messengers meeting, and have seen it warranted from scripture; and indeed the reason of thing; and the communion of churches upon occasion offered, must make such meetings requisite; but pray are there not some other things which the communion of churches may comprehend?

THEOPH. Yes, yes; such as the transcendent commu-

nion of members, either upon letters of recommendation, or, if they are well known, without; and the dismissal of members, and the reception of them in full communion; and the giving and receiving aid and assistance of a temporal nature; and in other things, which not only revelation, but the light of nature leads to.

NEOPHYTUS. A letter of recommendation for transient communion, I think I know nothing of: for it must be a testimony from one church unto the other, concerning such a person, that he is a church-member, and walks agreeable to the profession he made, and the relation he stands in to that church whereof he stands a member, and is thereupon recommended for communion, in the ordinances of Christ, with that sister church, during his abode in their neighbourhood. But pray, what is a dismissal?

THEOPH. Pray, EPENETUS, can you give him some account of one?

EPENETUS. You may remember I gave you some account of one *Alfred*, a young man that belonged to the church at *Hyfrydle*, and went up the first time with *Ffyddlon* to *Caerludd*, and staid there; this young man, after some little time, desired his dismissal, which was granted as follows:

The Church of Christ sojourning at Hyfrydle, to the Church of Christ sojourning at Caerludd, and meeting for public worship near Dwrborh, with their bishops and deacons; wishing all grace and peace.

Dearly Beloved in our Lord,

IT has been the good pleasure of the God of all grace, to bring you to himself, form you a church according to his word, and fill and furnish you with all officers and ordinances for edification: And it hath pleased him in providence to remove from hence to your neighbourhood, our beloved brother *Alfred*, who

now desires to be dismissed from our fellowship to yours. Seeing the all-wise God, who determines the bounds of our habitations, has thus disposed of him, and affords unto him a pleasant prospect of spiritual profit and advantage in your fellowship, we think his request very reasonable, and look upon it our duty to grant it; wherefore we do, as a church of Christ, now recommend, and actually dismiss, our dear brother *Alfred* (whose conversation while with us, was very honorable) to your fellowship in the Lord; declaring that when you receive him, his membership here ceaseth. We wish you and him abundance of the presence of Christ, and the unspeakable refreshing joys belonging thereunto; and in the most tender christian affection and love, remain

Your Brethren in the best Bonds.

Ordered at our Church-

Meeting,—such a day.

NEOPHYTUS. And how was he received? was he propounded? did they depute persons to visit him, and inquire after his conduct and conversation; and was he called to speak his experience? and was they called to judge of all, before his admission?

EPENETUS. No; nothing of all this; but the letter was read, and thereupon the church received him into fellowship.

NEOPHYTUS. Communion of churches to be sure there is, and should be, and great usefulness many ways may attend it: But, is there any such thing as the excommunication of a church, or churches, by formal admonitions and sentence?

THEOPH. No; there is no rule for that; churches are co-ordinate: and they holding the head, must be considered as true churches, and therefore in fellowship. If any may be apprehended to be under disorder, in the most tender manner prudent endeavours may be used to remove that disorder; but when all is done, the church must not be unchurched, but encouraged in

what is apprehended right ; and as to other things, left to the compassion and care of the Great Pastor.

NEOPHYTUS. But what if any of those christian communities, that are called churches, should turn *Arian*, or any other way deny the Lord that bought them ; or sink into prophaneness and immorality ?

THEOPH. Then are they no churches of Christ.

NEOPH. What if any church, or churches, receive in members cut off from other churches ? or what if they receive persons who have irregularly withdrawn from other churches ?

THEOPH. That creates a great deal of confusion ; but in such cases, the aggrieved church should publicly, yet with prudence, protest against such disorderly practices ; and thereby clear themselves in a peaceable way ; still owning the church that gave the offence as a church in communion.

NEOPHYTUS. But then the person they had cut off, may, by virtue of the communion of churches, come and sit down with them at the Lord's table, as if he never had been cut off.

THEOPH. No body can sit down with a church he does not belong to, without their leave. If they give him leave, who has power to hinder it ? But if any church lack wisdom, let them ask it of God.

CHRISTOPH. Our beloved EPHENETUS, your agreeable edifying story seems to contain the account of things done in the course of a pretty many years : In the first great work of God at *Caerludd* I remember you mentioned *Didwyll*, as one of the eminent converts, who must then be a person in years, for you said that he was *Yefan's* wife's father : and in their concern with the two erroneous persons, which brought about the messengers' meeting, I find he acted in the affair with the other elders ; sure by that time he must be a very old man.

EPHENETUS. He was so ; but upon his grey hairs there was a glory ; God blessed him with great abilities and faithfulness to the very last. But quickly after

that messengers' meeting, that holy man was ripened and removed to his eternal rest.

NEOPHYTUS. A perfect story of all the things wherewith the first church at *Caerludd* was through many years concerned, was not the design we entered upon; though perhaps all that their hands found to do, must be the same for kind with one head or other of the account we have gone through; but for my part, with the good-will of the company, I should be glad to hear how it was with that great man under the arrests of death.

EPENETUS. The end of that man was peace. When he found nature hastening a great pace to a dissolution, in a full church-meeting from an advanced seat where he usually sate, he spoke to the church as follows:

My dear brethren, It is now with a great deal of pleasure I look back to that room where I was reached by grace. Thither I came with a design to oppose christianity, and thought myself well furnished with arguments against all that concerned it. But I can never be thankful enough to all eternity, Christ did not suffer me there to speak one word against him. I saw that, which flesh and blood could not have revealed to me, the sinfulness of sin in me, and the fullness of God's salvation in Christ towards me. A power, evidencing itself to be almighty, sweetly conquered my soul, and made me willing. With and among you I have took Christ's yoke upon me, and now I think it becomes me to testify, that all along I have found it easy and delightful. You were pleased, as a church, to call me to serve Christ and you as a *ruling elder*, in the discharge of which trust many infirmities and imperfections have always attended me, which in measure distressed me; but through grace the service, so far as I could perform it, was my delight; and I would now humbly bless God for any help afforded, and for your love, obedience, and regard. The ordinances of Christ in his church have not been dry breasts unto me; while worshipping with you have

I tasted the joys of another world. And now, my dear brethren, I think it my duty to take my leave of you; for if I understand the meaning of some things, I feel I am like to come to this place no more. Here Christ often visited me, and now he sends for me to come to him, and I apprehend that my departure is at hand. Keep on your whole armour, I am just going to put mine off: you are in the wilderness, *watch and pray that you enter not into temptation.* All errors in judgment or practice avoid, keep a tender conscience, guard against all appearance of evil, and abhor every thing that tends to cool your love to Christ and to each other. See that whatever God makes by his word a duty to all or either of you, be strictly maintained; and in all the ways of God's judgments wait for him. Through grace I am resigned to God, and death is welcome to me; there is no sting; my sins that are many are forgiven; and the righteousness of Christ imputed to me is my robe and wedding-garment, and with his love am I filled. Though we part now, yet you and I shall meet ere long in heaven with our dear Lord, never to part more, for we shall be ever with him, and shall be like him, for *we shall see him as he is.* And unto him this once more I shall in prayer commit myself and you.

And upon this, with great judgment and affection in prayer, and with praise, he did cast the church and himself upon the rich, free, and sovereign grace of God in Christ; the whole church being in tears.

CHRISTOPH. In tears! ay, well they might, to hear and see their honored, faithful, and useful elder, taking his leave of them in such a manner: But what next?

EPENETUS. Why then, he lift up his voice and said, The eternal God be your refuge, and underneath let there be the everlasting arms! and bowed himself, and in the church said no more.

THEOPH. What a blessed parting was this!

EPENETUS. His servant led him home, then he took a small refreshment, worshipped God, and was helped

into his bed; and having enjoyed a little rest, looked about him and saw *Yefan* and his wife in the room; and thereupon said, What, *Yefan*, my son, and my father! art thou here! Blessed be God that ever I saw thee! And blessed be God that ever my dear daughter saw thee! Oh, my dear *Araf*! never forget the amazing providence, and the all-conquering grace of God! My soul was reached at once; and for a season thou wast detained in bonds, but he that preaches liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound, gave thee beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning. I am going to him, my dear children, I am going! His salvation is precious to me, and in his love I live. I long to be with him; and I bless his name, he is with me in this valley. Here is nothing terrible nor troublesome to me. The dissolving of my earthly house of this tabernacle is delightful to my faith; nor is it in any sense very distressful; I am going to a building of God, eternal in the heavens! Dear *Yefan*, pray with me, and then go home and take your rest; let me, if I live, see you again tomorrow, with my dear pastor *Dewi* and my brethren the elders and deacons.—*Yefan* prayed and took his leave, but *Araf* his wife would stay all night with her father; and a pleasant soul-refreshing night it was, notwithstanding what tender natural affections might necessarily feel.

The next day all his children and grand children came to visit him, and to every one he recommended a very close walk in faith with God in Christ; and told them how precious Jesus Christ, as the only way to the Father, was unto him; and that the everlasting covenant of grace was now an unspeakable comfort to him, and that according to the promises thereof, he fully believed he should in a little time see them all in heaven; desired them to remember it: for, said he, God is always mindful of it: and what I am quickly to pass through is unto me one of the blessings of it.

NEOPHYTUS. All this is very affecting! What a

blessed song is that prepared for a poor believer: *O death, where is thy sting!* But you said the elders were to come.

EPENETUS. Yes, and so they did; and he desired *Dewi* to go to prayer; which he did, you may justly think, with very many tears; and then *Didwyll* sat up in his bed and said,

My dear brethren, Great is the honor your dear Redeemer has conferred upon you, and great is the trust he has committed to you. You are called to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood. And I hope you shall be helped to take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock! Feed the sheep, feed the lambs; the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers of both. I greatly desire, that you never may sink into a sinful neglect of your proper duty towards the children of the church. By what I have observed I am afraid churches in ages to come will cast off that concern. Let the covenant of God be your great encouragement. Keep together in the strictest bonds of love and unity, appear against all appearance of immorality, and watch lest such errors as have not long since threatened us, or any other, should break in upon the church of God. Whenever you see a root of bitterness springing up, delay not to remove it lest many be defiled. Always have an eye upon them that seem weary of old truths and the trodden paths of christianity, affecting novelties in religion, and betimes, as the case requires, reprove them, that they may be sound in the faith. And let the discipline Christ has appointed in his house be diligently, faithfully, and impartially administered. You will excuse me that I, in my departing hours, take this freedom; it is, through grace, love to Christ, to his church, and to you, that puts me upon it.

Dewi. Our dear and honored brother, we bless the God of all grace for your comfort which you now in views of death enjoy, and for the precious advice you give. Your usefulness amongst us has been very

great, your fellowship in the gospel, from the first until now, exceeding precious, and your walk and works through grace exemplary; your advantage and our loss will be very great.

Didwyll. Nay, my honored pastor, in christianity have I been poor and fruitless; nor have, in the place Christ by his church put me into, discharged but a very small part of my duty: nor does my comfort which at present I enjoy, arise from the consideration of the least degree of perfection in any performance of mine: I have good reason to reckon all as loss, and I hope I do so; and rely on the righteousness of Christ alone: O! it is that, in his love, that is my present life. Justification by imputed righteousness, in views of death, I find pleasant; and so through grace in my life I found it, ever since my conversion. An advantage indeed it will be to me, to go to be with Christ, but not springing from any thing I have done or suffered. Through grace I am well persuaded that to die will be my gain; but the reason of that is because Christ is my life. But with regard to your loss, if there be any, Christ will abundantly make it up; wait on him and walk with him.

Haelionys. Oh my dear honored elder, are you going to leave us! great is my grief, I don't know how to bear it.

Didwyll. What, one of our dear deacons! Be not grieved at that; Christ will never leave you, and the poor you will have always with you. God has called you and your brethren, to a very honorable work, to make a representation of his mercy, that precious attribute wherein he delighteth. I don't know but you, in some sense, may have the advantage of us all, in that you are conversant so much and so often with duties that lead your thoughts perpetually afresh to the mercies and compassions of God. I love those more peculiarly under your care, and when I am gone you will see what I leave for you with impartiality to distribute among them. Be very tender, cheerful, and

faithful in your service. What I leave for the support and encouragement of our precious christian school, shall be duely took care of by those whom I leave in trust. And may the Redeemer's kingdom flourish!

Yefan. My dear father, how is it with you?

Didwyll. The outward man decays, and the inward man is renewed. Christ gives into my soul enlarged tastes of his glory. I am full of joy. Tell my dear brethren, the church, that I die, but God will surely visit them! And if their afflictions may seemingly increase, and their trials be enlarged even to persecution and martyrdom, let them not fear; through the fiery trials, and the swelling floods God will be with them: only let them not in the least deny Christ before men. And while you live, my dear son, preach the grace of God, that teaches persons to deny all ungodliness: and together with my dear pastor, declare the whole counsel of God.

Diwyd. O what a trial is this that now threatens us!

Didwyll. A trial! God has satisfied me with length of days, and hath shewed me his salvation! If this is a trial unto you, what must it be when God calls away your *pastor* and *teacher*! that surely will be like the overflowings of Jordan. Well, they are not to live for ever; but the Great Bishop abides: and he will provide, I hope, for you, persons of great grace, of great abilities, stedfast in the faith, and zealous in the work of their Lord. But as elders, may your Lord be with you, guide and direct all your steps before and among the flock! Mind your business with diligence, and rule well. And tell the elders of sister churches, that their dying friend finds in his heart the dearest love to them and the churches, and the warmest desires for their true prosperity.

THEOPH. What a brave spirit was this!

EPENETUS. An excellent one. But more talk they had upon the concerns of Christ's kingdom here, and the glory of his saints above, the beauties of holiness,

and the abundant peace Zion shall most certainly enjoy in this world; their present acquaintance with Christ's love and grace, and especially that which the dear departing saint enjoyed. Thereupon one or two went to prayer, and *Didwyll* desired they would sing the 116th Psalm; which they endeavoured to do: and with many tears parted with him for that night.

NEOPHYTUS. Pray EPHENETUS go on, let us have the last of him.

EPHENETUS. Next day *Dewi* and *Yefan* were there betimes; found him very weak, but, by what words he could express, found his faith very strong; they went to prayer; and when prayer was over, with a low voice he said, "He loved me with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness did he draw me. I am almost at home; he makes my cup to run over. To thy rest, to thy rest, O my soul! for thy God has dealt bountifully with thee." His last words were, *Let Zion flourish; my dear Redeemer, I come.* And so that eminent christian fell asleep in the Lord; and *Dewi* and *Yefan* closed his eyes.

NEOPHYTUS. Well, precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints! Christ did say, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.* But, pray, how was it with *Dewi* and *Yefan* in their last hours? I should be glad to be favored with the account of them.

EPHENETUS. Wonderfully great did grace and glory there shine; and especially upon one of them. But I humbly conceive, it is not expedient at this time to enter upon, and go through the story of that; for thereby we shall leave the church without pastor and teacher, or be carried unavoidably into a new story in the ordination of others; the same for kind with what we have gone through. *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my*

brethren and companions sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will see thy good. Amen.

CHRISTOPH. I do for myself, and all my dear friends and brethren, return you most hearty thanks, my dear EPHENETUS, for this edifying account: and I thank you all, my dear friends, for your company and assistance. The eternal Spirit fill us, fill our families, fill the churches, and hasten the time to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of our Redeemer, as the waters cover the sea. *Amen.*

THE END OF THE TENTH DIALOGUE.

THE NAMES OF THE DIALOGISTS.

CHRISTOPHILUS,	<i>A Lover of Christ.</i>
NEOPHYTUS,	<i>A young Christian.</i>
PHILALETHES,	<i>A Lover of Truth.</i>
PHILOLOGUS,	<i>A Lover of Learning.</i>
SYLLOGISTICUS,	<i>A Reasoner.</i>
THEOPHILUS,	<i>A Lover of God.</i>
EPENETUS,	<i>A Giver of Praise to God.</i>

PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE DIALOGUES.

<i>Achenog,</i>	Needy.	<i>Deddfol,</i>	Legalist.
<i>Addfwyn,</i>	Kind.	<i>Dewi,</i>	Beloved.
<i>Alfred,</i>		<i>Didwyll,</i>	Sincere.
<i>Anghenus,</i>	Poor.	<i>Diddrwg,</i>	Harmless.
<i>Anianol,</i>	Natural.	<i>Digyfraith,</i>	Without Law
<i>Araf,</i>	Mild.	<i>Diniwed,</i>	Without Offence.
<i>Astud,</i>	Careful.	<i>Diwall,</i>	Careful.
<i>Buddiol,</i>	Useful.	<i>Diwyd,</i>	Diligent.
<i>Bydol,</i>	Worldly.	<i>Doeth,</i>	Wise
<i>Byrbwyll,</i>	Hasty.	<i>Duwiol,</i>	Godly
<i>Cadarn,</i>	Strong.	<i>Edgar,</i>	
<i>Cariadus,</i>	Loving.	<i>Egwan,</i>	Weak.
<i>Cradog.</i>		<i>Ffyddlon,</i>	Faithful.
<i>Credadyn,</i>	A Believer.	<i>Galarus,</i>	Sorrowful.
<i>Crefyddol,</i>	Religious.	<i>Gobeithiol,</i>	Hopeful.
<i>Cyfiawn,</i>	Righteous.	<i>Gofalus,</i>	Watchful.
<i>Cyfrwys,</i>	Crafty.	<i>Graslawn,</i>	Gracious.
<i>Cyndyn,</i>	Stubborn.	<i>Gruffydd,</i>	Strong Faith.
<i>Cystuddiol,</i>	Afflicted.	<i>Gwastad,</i>	Constant.
<i>Cywir,</i>	True.	<i>Gweddus,</i>	Becoming.
<i>Deallus,</i>	{ A Man of Knowledge.	<i>Gwirion,</i>	Honest.
		<i>Haelionys,</i>	Bountiful.

Hawddgar,	Pleasant.	Rhinweddol,	Virtuous.
Hyderus,	Confident.	Siriol,	Courteous.
Hyddysg,	Teachable.	Synwyrol,	Thoughtful.
Hygar,	Amiable.	Tawel,	Meek.
Issel,	Low in Heart.	Tirion,	Gentle.
Llawen,	Joyful.	Tosturiol,	Pitiful.
Llon.	Cheerful.	Trist,	Heavy-hearted.
Meddwyn,	A Tippler.	Tyner,	Tender-hearted.
Moesol,	Moral.	Uniawn,	Upright.
Mwynedd,	Affable.	Ufudd,	Obedient.
Porthwyol,	Helpful.	Yefan,	Gift of Grace.
Prudd,	Prudent.	Ymgais,	Inquisitive.
Prydferth,	Comely.	Ystyriol,	Considerate.

PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE DIALECT.

Legalist.	Deedful.	Needy.	Achery.
Beloved.	Deer.	Kind.	Admiring.
Sincere.	Dichwyl.		Alfred.
Harmless.	Didwyl.	Poor.	Aggravated.
Without Law.	Digwyl.	Natural.	Amoral.
Without Offence.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Careful.	Dimwyl.	Careful.	Amoral.
Diligent.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Wise.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Godly.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Weak.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Faithful.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Sorrowful.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Hopful.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Watchful.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Gracious.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Strong Faith.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Constant.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Becoming.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Honest.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.
Humilist.	Dimwyl.	Unnatural.	Amoral.

FINIS.

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